**World Saṅkīrtana Party Inc.**

The Vaiṣṇava community is highly indebted to
H.H. Bhānu Swami for this beautiful
translation of the Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi.

## All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś*
*caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ*
*pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto*
*'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*

**The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendentally blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with māyā. Kṛṣṇa's name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.—*Padma Purāṇa***

# Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi
# &
# Nāma-bhajana

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

## Chapter 1 - Glories of the Holy Name

All glories to Gadādhara and Gaurāṅga, to the life of Jāhnavā, Nityānanda Prabhu. All glories to Sītā and Advaita, to Śrīvāsa and all the devotees.

On the shore of the ocean at Nīlācala, in the temple of Jagannātha, resides *dāru-brahmān*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in wooden form. Having mercifully descended in this material world, He is bestowing both material enjoyment and liberation. At this same *dhāma*, in order to give good fortune to mankind and make known the dharma of *Kali-yuga*, Śrī Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a *sannyāsī*, came and set up residence in the house of Kāśi Miśra. There, along with His devotees, He gave out love of Godhead to all, just as a desire tree gives treasure freely. There the Lord took great care to present the proper spiritual teachings to the living entities. This He did by making various devotees explain different aspects of devotional service, while He sat and listened in great bliss. In this way, through Rāmānanda Rāya's mouth He taught the concept of *rasa*, through the mouth of Sarvabhauma He taught the real principle of liberation, through the mouth of Rūpa Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana He taught the details of *rasa* and through the mouth of Haridāsa He taught the full glories of the holy name.

One day, after bathing in the ocean, the Lord met with Haridāsa Ṭhākura at the Siddha-bakula tree, and in blissful mind He carefully inquired from Haridāsa how the *jīvas* could easily become delivered from material existence.

Grasping the Lord's feet, Haridāsa's body shivered and tears poured from His eyes. In great humility he spoke: "O Lord, Your *līlā* is very deep. I have absolutely nothing—I have nothing. Your lotus feet are my only possession. For no good reason have You asked this question to such an unfit person as I. What can the result be?

"O Lord, You are Kṛṣṇa Himself, who has this time descended in Navadvīpa dhāma to deliver the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga. There You mercifully display Your pastimes. If You kindly put those pastimes within my heart, I will be happy. It is by Your great mercy that You have revealed Your unlimited name, qualities, form and pastimes in the material world so that even low rascals such as I can taste them.

"You are the spiritual sun; I am the particle of its light. You are the Lord; I am Your eternal servant. The nectar of Your lotus feet is my wealth of happiness; my hope rests in the nectar of Your name.

"As I am such a low person, how do I know what to say, O Lord and Master?

Still, I must obey Your order. What comes from my mouth I will happily present to You, not considering the faults.

## Kṛṣṇa and His Energies

"The Supreme Person who is completely independent and free to act according to His desire is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He exists as the Supreme Truth, one without a second; but is inconceivably always in the company of His eternal energies. These energies are never independent of Kṛṣṇa; rather they are intimately related with Him. This is stated in the Vedic *mantras*. Kṛṣṇa is the independent principal conscious entity, and the energies are His attributes. They can never be independent. Kṛṣṇa may be called *vibhu*, the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent master, and the manifestations from His energies—all other existing phenomena—may be called *vaibhāva*, the opulent expressions of His factual existence. Yet, even in the midst of unlimited, countless energies scattered throughout endless time, Kṛṣṇa remains separate and independent in His original form. It is through these energies, these *vaibhāva* of the *vibhu*, that the Lord's presence can be perceived.

"The manifestations from Kṛṣṇa's energies are of three types: *cid-vaibhāva*, or spiritual manifestations coming from Kṛṣṇa's spiritual potency; *acid-vaibhāva*, or the dull, unconscious material world; and *jīva*, or countless souls, small particles of spirit. This is the statement of scripture.

## Cid-vaibhāva—Spiritual Manifestation

"The *cid-vaibhāva* consists of Kṛṣṇa's abodes, such as the unlimited number of Vaikuṇṭha planets; Kṛṣṇa's unlimited names, such as Govinda, Hare, etc.; Kṛṣṇa's unlimited forms, such as the two-handed form holding the flute; Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary qualities, such as affectionately giving bliss to His devotees; Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, such as the *rāsa-līlā* of Vraja and the *saṅkīrtana* activities of Navadvīpa. Even though these spiritual manifestations may descend into the material world and be visible or perceivable by the living entities, they remain spiritually untouched by material influence. All these elements intimately related to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa are called Viṣṇupāda throughout the Vedas. The word denotes that the *cid-vaibhāva* are inseparable from the Lord Himself. The spiritual phenomena are inseparable from the prime spiritual entity.

"Therefore, in the spiritual realm of Viṣṇupāda, the changes which occur due to the influences of the material energy are not present. That realm is transcendental to material change, and like Lord Viṣṇu Himself, is pure goodness, unmixed with passion or ignorance in the least, unlike the condition of the material world. Kṛṣṇa and the plenary Viṣṇu expansions are all of pure goodness. Thus, whether in Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha, the Causal Ocean, or the material world, these personalities remain unaffected, as the Lord of all the demigods and the Lord of *māyā*.

"Viṣṇu forms are the Lords of *māyā* and are in pure goodness, whereas Brahmā, Śiva, etc. possess goodness mixed with other modes.

## Acid-vaibhāva

"Across the Virajā River, which is the separating boundary, opposite from the Viṣṇu forms, spiritual abodes, spiritual pastimes and other spiritual manifestations, lies the nonspiritual realm composed of the universes of fourteen planetary systems. This realm under the control of the Lord's illusory energy is called Devī-dhāma, the abode of *māyā*. It is composed of the five material elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether), plus mind, intelligence and false ego, which form the gross and subtle bodies of the living entities. The seven upper and seven lower planetary systems are all contained within the *acid-vaibhāva*, or nonspiritual manifestation of one of the Lord's energies.

## Jaiva-vaibhāva

"Whereas the spiritual manifestation *(cid-vaibhāva)* is the full spiritual principle, and the illusory material world *(acid-vaibhāva)* is its shadow, *jīvas* are atomic particles of spiritual element. Because the *jīvas* are spiritual in character, they also have some degree of independence, and have the potentiality of unlimited bliss which is natural to the spiritual realm. Those *jīvas* who resort to Kṛṣṇa to attain that bliss remain as liberated souls eternally associated with Kṛṣṇa. But, thinking of his own happiness, if one selfishly desires to enter the neighboring abode of *māyā*, he turns away from Kṛṣṇa and takes a material body in the material universe. Having fallen into the revolving wheel of continuous activities, good or bad, with their results, the *jīva* wanders throughout the universe, sometimes in *svarga*, sometimes in hell, taking birth with a material body to enjoy life in all the eight million four hundred thousand

species of beings.

"But as You are the Lord, the controller of the *jīvas*, and the *jīvas* are Your energies, You are always thinking of their welfare. Whatever happiness a *jīva* may seek, You kindly bestow it. Therefore one who desires impermanent happiness in the material world achieves it without difficulty by the Lord's mercy. All the processes to achieve this happiness of sense gratification, such as rules of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, *yajña*, *yoga*, *homa* and *vrata*, which are pious activities, are simply material without spiritual transcendental nature at all. The results of these practices—elevation to higher planets and sense enjoyment—are material and temporary. Thus, in such activities for satisfying the temporary senses, the soul remains unsatisfied. The attempt to achieve happiness by gaining a temporary situation in a higher planet is a gross error by the soul.

"Similarly, by the mercy of devotees, a *jñānī* may perform activities of *bhakti*. Such *jñāna* mixed with devotional activities is also classified as a secondary path of *bhakti*. Such a *jñānī* easily arrives at the stage of faith in Kṛṣṇa, and can quickly proceed in full devotional service.

"The servant *jīvas*, desiring the trifling fruits in the hell of the material world, reject their master, but Kṛṣṇa, knowing what is best for their welfare, forces them to give up the enjoyment *(bhukti)* resulting from fruitive activities *(karma)* and the liberation *(mukti)* resulting from speculative endeavors *(jñāna)*, and at last bestows the sweet fruit of devotion to Kṛṣṇa *(bhakti)*. It is only the mercy of the Lord, who is made of pure mercy, that He puts the *jīvas* on a secondary path which lets the *jīva* fulfill his material desire for some time, but simultaneously gives him faith in the process of *bhakti*. If it were not for the mercy of the Lord, how could the living entities ever become pure and enter their position of happiness in the spiritual realm?

"In the Satya-yuga the Lord supplied the process of meditation, by which the *ṛṣis* became purified. Attaining purification, the Lord gave the treasure of *bhakti*. Similarly, in the Treta-yuga, the Lord arranged for purification by performance of sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga, the Lord gave temple worship for purification, as paths leading to *bhakti*. But seeing the pitiful state of the *jīvas* in the Kali-yuga, the Lord gave up hope in the processes of *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*. In Kali-yuga such troubles as short life, many diseases, decreased intelligence and strength, afflict all *jīvas*. Therefore the secondary paths of *karma* and *jñāna*—the practices of *varṇāśrama*, *sāṅkhya*, *yoga* and *jñāna*, mixed with a little

devotional activity—are too narrow and obstructive. The only result in Kali-yuga of these paths is deviation from the path of *bhakti*. Thus if one takes to these paths in hope of success in the Kali-yuga, life will simply become difficult for the *jīvas*.

## The Chief Path—Bhakti and the Holy Name

"Therefore, thinking of the welfare of the *jīvas* in Kali-yuga, the Lord has descended with His name. The Lord descended and preached the path for Kali yuga—the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Since by this process the *jīva* may directly achieve the highest treasure of Kṛṣṇa *prema*, which is actual happiness, it is called the major or chief path, as distinct from the secondary paths of *karma* and *jñāna*. In this process all the *jīva* has to do is sing and remember the name of the Lord constantly. When the impure *jīva* takes up the process of *bhakti* for his purification, he is performing *sādhana-bhakti*, or devotional service in practice. When his practice reaches purity and perfection *(sādhya)*, in other words, when the *jīva* achieves *prema-bhakti*, the activities of *sādhana-bhakti*—hearing and chanting the Lord's name, etc.—remain as the activities of *prema-bhakti*. The principal activities of devotional service are eternal. At the perfectional stage of *prema*, the means *(sādhana)* and the end *(sādhya)*, or the method *(upāya)* and what is to be attained by the method *(upeya)* become nondifferent. Thus there is no barrier or obstacle between the life and activities during training and at the perfectional stage: the holy name remains constant in both cases. In this way the *jīva* can easily transcend the material world."

Haridāsa continued: "I am just a fallen, low person, so much absorbed in sense objects. Being so foolish, I did not even take up Your name, O Lord!"

With tears flowing incessantly from his eyes, Haridāsa, the incarnation of Brahmā, fell breathless at the Lord's feet.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prays that whoever is able to take refuge in the Lord, the Lord's devotees and devotional service, receives the full effects of the holy name, which is a touchstone yielding all desires. At that time the name becomes the center of his existence.

# Chapter 2 - Accepting the Holy Name

*gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*śrī advaita jaya śrīvāsādi bhakta-gaṇa*

In the ecstasy of *prema*, Haridāsa wept, and in *prema*, Gaurāṅga embraced him. Gaurāṅga said: "Where is there such a devotee as you, Haridāsa? You know all the spiritual truths and are at all times transcendental to material nature. By taking birth in a low family, you have shown to the world that obtaining Kṛṣṇa is not dependent on wealth, honor, family or refinement, but is dependent on faith alone. Whoever has faith in the process of unalloyed worship of Kṛṣṇa is greater than the demigods. You have understood that the name is the Supreme Truth—both the means and the end; you know the full glories of the name; you are ideal in your conduct of devotional activities *(ācāra)*; and you are learned and skillful in preaching. Haridāsa, I request you to describe the unlimited glories of the name, for it makes Me happy when I hear those glories from your mouth.

"Whoever says the holy name even once is considered a Vaiṣṇava, and the householder should be careful to respect such a person. But one who is constantly chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is even a better Vaiṣṇava, being endowed with all good qualities. And one who, by his very presence can make others chant the name in devotion, is the highest Vaiṣṇava. Now describe to Me exactly all the ways that the living entities take up this name of Kṛṣṇa."

Folding his hands in respect, with choked up throat and tears in his eyes, Haridāsa began to speak. First, he gave a general description of the name:

"The holy name is *cintāmaṇi*, the object that gives everything one desires. To the materialists it gives *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, and to the nonfruitive devotees it gives pure, unalloyed love of Kṛṣṇa. The name is unlimited, beginningless, fully conscious, and inseparable from the chief consciousness, Kṛṣṇa. Whatever is in Kṛṣṇa is in the holy name, for the two are nondifferent. The name is eternally free from material contamination and spiritually situated in a state of pure goodness *(śuddha-sattva)* like Kṛṣṇa. Though descending into the material world, the name remains pure, eternal, and the embodiment of the highest sweetness *(rasa)*.

"Like any object, Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Reality, is known by four

characteristics: name, form, qualities and activities. But in the case of Kṛṣṇa, these elements are unlimited. The Supreme Personality of Godhead expresses Himself by means of these four elements, which take their spiritual existence by means of the Lord's *sandhinī* energy. By these elements Kṛṣṇa attracts all the people of the universe, and as His name is nondifferent, the existence of the name in the universe serves the same purpose.

"Kṛṣṇa and His form are also nondifferent, and thus His form and His name cannot be separated either. If one remembers Kṛṣṇa's name, one will also receive Kṛṣṇa's form.

"As for qualities, Kṛṣṇa has sixty-four remarkable qualities in fullness, which are partially represented in His avatāras, in His *guṇa-avatāras* Brahmā and Śiva, and up to sixty in number in Lord Nārāyaṇa. But Kṛṣṇa's name has all the eternal qualities in full, which expand to uncountable numbers. The pastimes of the Lord take place in the waves of these qualities in the Lord's *dhāmas* of Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha and Vraja, and these are also fully spiritual.

"In spiritual existence, name, form, quality and activity are not differentiated from the person's actual identity; but by combination with dull material elements which are not conscious, the covered living entity knows only names, qualities, forms and activities which are separate from one another and from his real self. Name, form, qualities and activities are one for the pure living entities, but taking shelter of a material body, the *jīva* distinguishes differences. Since Kṛṣṇa is always beyond material tinge, all these elements are eternally parts of one inseparable principle.

However, among these four elements by which one can know the object Kṛṣṇa, the holy name is the primary element, for it is by the name that all other characteristics can be perceived in full. As one can realize the form, qualities and activities of the Lord by taking shelter of the name, the name is thus accepted as the Vaiṣṇava *dharma.*"

Lord Caitanya himself accepted as a fact that through the chanting of the name all the pastimes of the Lord could be revealed.

Next, Haridāsa considered who is a Vaiṣṇava:

"That person is called a Vaiṣṇava who takes the holy name in faith and pure intention; and that person is called a semi-Vaiṣṇava who takes the name, but with the impurity of *nāmābhāsa.* However, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, the semi-Vaiṣṇava, gradually becomes a pure Vaiṣṇava.

"In either case, one must take to the name, for in this material world there is nothing comparable to it. It is the ultimate treasure in Kṛṣṇa's storehouse, since it contains within it the whole spiritual realm. The particles of spirit who are parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, have in illusion come into this world of dull matter, and the holy name, containing all aspects of Kṛṣṇa and the full power of Kṛṣṇa, has come into this world just to deliver those spirit souls. One should know that everything in the world other than the *jīva* and the holy name, are without substance.

Kṛṣṇa's names are of two types, primary and secondary. By taking shelter of the primary names, the living entity gets the highest benefit. Those names which are part of the transcendental *līlā* of the Lord are considered primary names. Names such as Govinda, Gopāla, Rāma, Rādhānātha and Hari reveal the eternal *līlās* of the Lord, and by chanting them the living entity gets entrance into the spiritual world.

"The secondary names are those which describe the Lord's functions. The Creator, Paramātmā and Brahman are names for use in *karma* and *jñāna-kānda*, and give material elevation and liberation. Since the principal names alone give love of Godhead, the devotees accept only the principal names.

"Just as there are different types of names with different effects, so there are different ways of chanting the name with different effects. The scriptures of course declare that if one chants the name of Kṛṣṇa once or hears the name of Kṛṣṇa once, whether it be the pure name or the impure name, the *jīva* is still delivered from the clutches of the material energy. However, the types of deliverance and the speed of deliverance must be noted. If the name is chanted in *nāmābhāsa* (impurely) the benefit will come slowly. Because the person will eventually attain pure love of God, the *ābhāsa* name is considered all-auspicious. By the process of *nāmābhāsa* chanting, sins are gradually destroyed, until the name is chanted and heard purely. At that stage of pure chanting, the devotee quickly achieves the goal—pure love of Godhead.

"There is also the case of chanting or hearing the holy name with more impurity than *nāmābhāsa*, situated at a greater distance from the pure name. The greater the distance, the less the effect of the name. Such obstruction, or distance from the name, where chanting gives little or no effect, is called *aparādha* or offense. The obstruction of *vyavadhāna* (separation) is the mistaken idea that Kṛṣṇa's name and Kṛṣṇa are different or separate. In other words, the belief that the Absolute Truth does not reside in the name and that therefore

chanting the name cannot bring one to the highest realization of truth, is called *vyavadhāna* or separation. As long as this belief persists, love of God is impossible to attain.

"Besides separation based on philosophical principles, there is another type of separation in chanting. This is syllabic separation of Kṛṣṇa's names. For instance, if the syllables *"ha"* and *"ri"* are separated from each other by some other syllables, by this syllabic separation the effects of the holy name are greatly hindered. This is different from the utterance of the word *"hārām"* by the yavana unintentionally when he is dying, for there is no separation of the syllables in that utterance. It is therefore classified as *nāmābhāsa*. *"Ha"* and *"ri"* separated syllabically have much less effect. Of the two types of separation, the philosophical separation of the māyāvādīs is much more detrimental to spiritual progress. The belief that the name is not all-powerful and absolute is a great disturbance in Kali-yuga and is not in accordance with scripture.

"By these considerations one can understand the real nature of the holy name: it is the chanting and hearing of a principal name of Kṛṣṇa, devoid of *nāmābhāsa*, *aparādha* or *vyavadhāna* (separation). That is the pure name *(śuddha-nāma)*. Whoever accepts and chants that pure name is known as a real Vaiṣṇava, and may belong to any of the three categories mentioned earlier. In happiness one should serve such a Vaiṣṇava always.

"In order to overcome *nāmābhāsa* and get the pure name, the *jīva* must serve the bona fide *guru* with great attention. By doing this the *anarthas* will disappear and the pure name endowed with all spiritual potency will dance on the devotee's tongue. At that time, he will never give up the stream of sweet nectar emanating from the holy name; the *jīva* will chant constantly, mad with the sweetness of the name. In joy the name will dance, the *jīva* will dance, and the treasure of love of God will dance—the whole universe will dance and *māyā* will flee.

"The different types of holy names have been discussed. Now consider who has the right or *adhikāra* for the holy name. Any one who is a human being, regardless of material considerations, such as class, varṇa, birth, sex, age, or education, has the right to take up the holy name, for the Lord has invested in the name a transcendental power that surpasses all distinctions. But although everyone has the right to the name, only those who have developed faith in Kṛṣṇa and His name will actually take shelter of the name and seriously chant it. Thus any human being has the right to the name, and one who has faith

becomes the practitioner of the name.

"In other spiritual practices there are restrictions in performance according to time, place, cleanliness or uncleanliness. But in taking up the name, this is not so, for the name overcomes all these restrictions by its invested power. Whereas in acts of charity, sacrifice, bathing, *japa*, etc. there is always consideration of time, place, and cleanliness; in the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, faith alone is the only necessity. And whoever takes shelter of the holy name in Kali-yuga achieves the highest perfection in life. The conclusion is that the living entity in Kali-yuga, being situated in the midst of *māyā*, must take up the name.

"One who accepts the name and practices it, though doing this with minimal restrictions, must still be careful to perform all actions favorable to increasing devotion to Kṛṣṇa, reject all actions which hamper devotion to Kṛṣṇa, and simply remember the name of Kṛṣṇa constantly while passing out his life in the material world. Never should he deviate to the path of fruitive activities or worship of demigods. Instead he should chant the name, serve the devotees, and achieve the goal of life-Kṛṣṇa *prema*."

Thus concluding his explanation of how the *jīvas* should accept the holy name, Haridāsa Ṭhākura began weeping. Falling at the Lord's feet, he held them and begged for attraction to the holy name. For one who performs devotional service at the feet of the *uttama* Vaiṣṇava, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the transcendental touchstone of the holy name will become the center of his life.

## Chapter 3 - Nāmābhāsa

*gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*sītādvaita jaya śrīvāsādi bhakta-jana*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu mercifully lifted Haridāsa up with His own hands and said, "Listen, Haridāsa, to My words. Now explain in detail the meaning of *nāmābhāsa*. If one thoroughly understands *nāmābhāsa*, one's chanting of the holy name will become pure. Then, by the power of that pure chanting, he will end his material existence. The holy name, like the sun, dispels the darkness of illusion. However, sometimes clouds or mist cover the sun from the viewer so

that only a portion of light comes through. In the same way, when ignorance and *anarthas* predominate, the sun of the holy name becomes covered and only a portion of the full effect of the name is felt. Therefore, in some cases, the holy name will appear in full force in the heart of the chanter, but in other cases clouds of ignorance and anarthas will minimize the effect of the name on the chanter.

"What is ignorance? Ignorance is of three types. If one does not know the true spiritual nature of the holy name which one has accepted, this ignorance of the name, like mist, leads one into darkness. Secondly, a person ignorant that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord will take to worship of the demigods and the path of material piety. Thirdly, one who is ignorant of the transcendental nature of his own self as an infinitesimal part of Kṛṣṇa and His world, takes shelter of the world of impermanence and illusion; thus he will remain eternally in ignorance."

When the Lord had finished, Haridāsa said, "Today I am most fortunate, for from my mouth the Supreme Lord Himself, Śrī Caitanya, will hear about the holy name. "Haridāsa first explained about ignorance:

"Knowledge means knowing Kṛṣṇa is the Lord, that the living entities are His servants, and that the material world is a nonconscious gross manifestation or by-product of the Lord. The person who does not know clearly the nature of these principles and their relationship, lives under the shadow of ignorance. This is one cause of *nāmābhāsa*, or covering of the sun of the pure holy name, by which its full effects cannot be felt.

"Actually, the mist of ignorance simply covers the individual living entity's eye in a localized position. Just as the sun becomes invisible only from the relative position of the individual under the cloud, but is never really covered. So the holy name is never covered, for it is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, and eternally transcendental and pure. The full effects are diminished for those people who have over their eyes the cloud of *anarthas* and the mist of ignorance.

"What are *anarthas*? These are classified as thirst for material objects *(asat-tṛṣṇā)*, miserliness of the heart *(hṛdaya-daurbalya)* and offense *(aparādha)*.

"The category of thirst for material objects is divided thus: craving for material objects in this world, craving for heavenly sense pleasures in the next life, desire for mystic yoga powers, and the desire for liberation in Brahman.

Weakness of heart may be analysed as attachment to trifling things unrelated to Kṛṣṇa, deceit, envy of someone else's progress, and longing for position and fame. Offense may be divided into offenses to the holy name, offenses to Kṛṣṇa Himself *(sevāparādha)*, offenses to Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and offenses to other living entities. By these *anarthas*, the influence of the holy name becomes obstructed and the full transcendental nature of the name is not manifested.

"The living entity will continue under the shadow of *nāmābhāsa* as long as he is ignorant of *sambandha-tattva*, the basic facts concerning the *jīva*, God and the material nature, and their mutual relationship. However, when the serious student takes shelter of a bona fide *guru*, by force of his effective spiritual practice he can remove the obstructions blocking the sun of the holy name. When the clouds and mist go away, the brilliant sun of the name becomes visible and bestows upon the devotee the treasure of love of God. After the bona fide *guru* gives *sambandha-jñāna*, he instructs the disciple on the practice of culturing the holy name *(sādhana-bhakti)*. This is called *abhidheya* or process. By this specific process the name will show its influence and drive out the *anarthas*. Finally, the *jīva* achieves the goal of life—love of God—and in that position he continues his performance of chanting the holy name in full spiritual bliss *(prema)*.

"The ignorance of correct knowledge is explained as follows. The living entity takes shelter of the bona fide *guru* and with genuine faith receives the correct knowledge about Kṛṣṇa, the spirit soul, material nature and the relationship of the three, according to scripture. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal Lord, and the living entities are His eternal servants, linked to the Lord by the bond of love *(prema)*. This relationship of *jīva* to God in *prema-bhakti* is also eternal. This is the living entity's constitutional nature, which has only to be uncovered.

"However, when the *jīva* forgets that he is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he comes into the material world looking for happiness. But this universe of illusion is a prison house for the *jīvas*, acting as the remedial or reformatory process by punishing the *jīvas* for turning away from Kṛṣṇa. The material world is meant as a place of purification.

"By the mercy of the pure Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, if the *jīva* takes up Kṛṣṇa's name with correct knowledge of *sambandha*, he will certainly attain the great treasure of *prema*, the perfectional activity of the living entity. At that time, even liberation of merging into the Lord's effulgence becomes detestable. But as long as the transcendental knowledge of *sambandha* is not accepted, the

*anarthas* and ignorance must remain, and the person will continue on the platform of *nāmābhāsa*. Though the person chants, the effect is limited.

"However, even chanting in the *nāmābhāsa* stage is considered to be very auspicious. It is considered the chief of pious activities, for by the accumulation of *nāmābhāsa* activity one eventually gains faith to accept devotional service properly. *Nāmābhāsa* is considered higher than the activities of *yoga*, sacrifice, *varṇāśrama* rules, austerities, etc., because it will lead to the path of pure *bhakti*. The processes of *yoga*, austerities, etc. unless mixed with some activities of *bhakti*, will never lead to *bhakti*.

"What are the effects of chanting in *nāmābhāsa*? By chanting in *nāmābhāsa* all sinful effects are destroyed and one can attain liberation from the material world. All the effects of Kali-yuga are overcome. By chanting at this stage, all anxieties will go and peace can be obtained. Evil influences of ghosts, demons, spirits and unfavorable planets are also nullified. Even the residents of hellish planets can achieve liberation by chanting in *nāmābhāsa*, for *nāmābhāsa* destroys the effects of sinful activities already committed *(prārabdha-karma)*. For these reasons, *nāmābhāsa* is even more powerful than the Vedas and all holy places. It surpasses all the materialistic pious activities of *karma-kānda*.

"Because the holy name is invested with all Kṛṣṇa's transcendental energies, even by chanting in *nāmābhāsa* one can attain the goals of *dharma*, *artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*, the cherished aims of the *varṇāśrama*, system. This chanting can give one the position of happiness in the material universe. It is the only resort for the helpless. One can go up to the border of Vaikuṇṭha planets by this chanting. Scriptures recommend the name as the process for Kali-yuga in particular.

"*Nāmābhāsa* as unintentional pious activity may be classed into four types: *saṅketa*, *parihāsa*, *stobha*, and *hela*. Chanting in *saṅketa*, or indirectly, means that one chants the name of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa with a specific material conception, or chants the holy name unintentionally while thinking of some other object with the same sound. An example of the first type is Ajamīla, who called the name of his son, who happened to be named Nārāyaṇa. He chanted the name of Viṣṇu but with the intention of calling his son. Still he was saved from the yamadūtas and eventually attained Vaikuṇṭha. An example of the second type of *saṅketa* is the yavana who exclaims *"hārām"* when dying. Because the syllables *"hā"* and *"rām"* are present forming a name of the Lord accidentally, that person attains liberation. Because this type of *nāmābhāsa* is the least offensive, the

power of the holy name is intact to a large degree.

"One who utters the name of the Lord in *parihāsa*, a joking mood, such as Jarāsandha, also crosses over the material world. Uttering the name in *stobha* or derision, as Śiśupāla did, can also cut the chains of material existence. Uttering the name in *hela* or disregard, without attention, also brings benefit. The mlecchas attain liberation by all these types of *nāmābhāsa*.

"These types of *nāmābhāsa*: coincidence, jest, derision and disregard, being without real faith in Kṛṣṇa, are situated on the lower border of *nāmābhāsa*. On the other hand, if one has genuine faith in Kṛṣṇa and takes to the holy name while *anarthas* are still present, that stage is called *śraddhā-nāmābhāsa*. Since even by chanting in *nāmābhāsa* without faith one can attain liberation, how can one describe the results of chanting in *nāmābhāsa* with faith? By chanting in *nāmābhāsa* one can get everything except *prema*.

"If one gets to the point of *śraddhā-nāmābhāsa*, quickly the *anarthas* will go and the pure name will be revealed. Chanting the pure name, *śuddha-nāma*, one will certainly get *prema* very quickly. It may be concluded, therefore, that *nāmābhāsa* itself cannot give Kṛṣṇa *prema*; but by progressing from this stage to the stage of *śuddha-nāma*, by means of following rules of *sādhana* as laid down by the *guru*, one can get love of God.

"Thus, provided one does not commit *nāma-aparādha*, *nāmābhāsa* is praiseworthy. It is considered unlimited times better than *karma* or *jñāna* because a person with such *nāmābhāsa* will eventually get faith, and that seed of faith will then develop into attraction and taste for Kṛṣṇa, which will lead to the stage of *śuddha-nāma* and then *prema*.

"*Ābhāsa* means a faint light or indirect image. It is of two types: reflected light and obstructed light. Similarly, there are two types of faint faith: reflected or distorted faith, and shadow or partial faith. From partial faith comes dim *nāmābhāsa*, which eventually develops into the pure name and love of God. This is classed as actual *nāmābhāsa*. Just as clouds obstruct the full brilliance of the sun, so the clouds of *anarthas* and the mist of ignorance in the *jīva's* heart allow only a faint light of the name to enter.

"Though having the opportunity to take pure faith, other living entities take a distorted faith, which is compared to the light reflected from water. The light is broken and the image not intact. When people with distorted faith receive the holy name, the name that they take is also distorted. Such people are

characterized by deeply rooted desire for enjoyment and liberation, to the extent that they strive day and night to fulfill their desires for enjoyment and liberation. Because such people may use the name, they may appear to have faith in the name, but this is not actual faith. If one takes to the name with that faith, no matter how long one continues, one will not progress to purification, but will remain at the same perverted stage continually. Instead, such practice usually leads to *māyāvāda* mentality, and finally one becomes a cheater. Such a person thinks that the holy name is simply a means to a higher end, and by such mentality the glory and power of the name become lost. The only result is offense.

"Here is the difference between real *nāmābhāsa*, where due to obstruction the effects of the name are felt faintly, and distorted *nāmābhāsa*. In real *nāmābhāsa*, many *anarthas* may be generated out of ignorance and weakness of heart, but all these effects can be cleared by continual chanting of the name. However, in distorted *nāmābhāsa* born from cheating knowledge, offenses simply increase. This is not called *nāmābhāsa* but *nāma-aparādha*.

"The māyāvādīs consider Kṛṣṇa, His name, form, *līlā* and qualities to be false and perishable. On this ground they will never receive love of God, for such a path leads in the opposite direction from the path of devotional service or *bhakti*. Thus there can be no real compromise between the two paths; the māyāvāda philosophy is considered the enemy of *bhakti* and its followers are considered the greatest offenders. Actually, the holy name never comes from the mouths of these people, for although the syllables may be heard, the holy name with all its transcendental potency does not reside there. The māyāvādī chanting the name in this way, simply goes to hell because he thinks that the name is temporary and material. While chanting the name, the māyāvādī desires enjoyment and liberation, and by being so deceptive and chanting with motivation, he receives only pain for all his troubles.

"If, by the mercy of the devotees, he can give up the aspiration for *bhukti* and *mukti* and accept his position as servant of Kṛṣṇa, being repentent and obedient, he can receive the real name and realize actual knowledge of *sambandha-jñāna*. Then, by constantly chanting the name, tears will come to his eyes, the mercy inherent in the name will come, and his true nature, *prema-bhakti*, will become manifest.

"But, the māyāvādī who holds that both Kṛṣṇa and the position of the *jīva* as Kṛṣṇa's servant are temporary and imaginary is an offender against the name,

and dwells in the deep hole of misfortune. Since the name is a desire tree, it gives the māyāvādī his desire of merging into the Lord's effulgence. Of the five types of liberation, *sāyujya* or merging gives relief from the pains of the material ocean, but extinguishes one's own identity as well. Illusioned men, thinking there will be happiness in that state, receive only this shadow of happiness. For in that state, forgetting Kṛṣṇa completely, they cannot obtain service in eternal bliss and knowledge, which is the perfection of life. If one has no *bhakti*, no love for Kṛṣṇa, no constant faith and conviction in Kṛṣṇa, how can one attain real, eternal happiness?

"In summary, one who is at the stage of *nāmābhāsa* does not accept the māyāvādī philosophy, nor is his heart contaminated or weakened by its influence. The full glory of the sun is not visible when covered by clouds; but when the clouds are removed, the sun shines in full glory. Just in this manner, when a person receives knowledge of the actual nature of the name by the mercy of the *guru*, when the ignorance and *anarthas* causing *nāmābhāsa* are dissipated by *sambandha-jñāna* and *sādhana* of proper chanting, that *nāmābhāsa* can be transformed into *śuddha-nāma*, at which stage one will receive the full brilliance of the name in the form of *prema*.

"Therefore, whoever carefully avoids the company and influence of māyāvādīs, takes shelter of the pure name, and serves out of love, will become fully satisfied in full perfection. That is the Lord's instruction. Whoever accepts this instruction is a fortunate soul, and whoever rejects it is a rascal who will not be delivered for a hundred million births. To state it in another way, one should simply give up bad association and take shelter of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. Other than Mahāprabhu's feet, other than His mercy, there is no way."

Thus did Haridāsa Ṭhākura conclude his explanation of *nāmābhāsa*. One who takes shelter at the two lotus feet of Haridāsa, will sing incessantly his glorification of the name entitled "*Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*."

## Chapter 4 - Blasphemy of Vaiṣṇavas

*gadādhara-prāṇa jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*jaya sītānātha śrīvasādi bhakta-gaṇa*

Śrī Caitanya said: "O Haridāsa, now describe in detail the offenses to the holy name." Haridāsa answered, "By Your power I will say what You make me say.

"Offenses to the holy name are analyzed as ten, according to scripture. One should be fearful of committing these offenses. They are as follows:

1. To blaspheme or criticize the Vaiṣṇavas.

2. To consider that other living entities, such as the demigods, are independent of Kṛṣṇa.

3. To disobey or disrespect the *guru*.

4. To disrespect scriptural authority.

5. To interpret the meaning of the name and to think that the glories of the name are imaginary.

6. To commit sinful activity on the strength of the holy name.

7. To give the name to the unfaithful who are not ready to accept.

8. To consider the holy name as *karma* and pious activity.

9. To be inattentive while chanting the holy name.

10. After having taken correct knowledge, being aware of the glories of the name, to remain attached to the material world of "I and mine," and ultimately reject the name."

These shall be described one after another. The first offense, known as *sādhu-nindā*, criticism of Vaiṣṇavas, is very harmful for those wanting to progress in spiritual life. First let us define what *sādhu* or Vaiṣṇava is. In the Eleventh Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Kṛṣṇa enumerates to Uddhava the characteristics of a *sādhu*:

*dayālu*—merciful,

*sahiṣṇu*—tolerant,

*sama*—equal,

*droha-śūnya-vrata*—penance without injury to the body,

*satya-sāra*—truthfulness,

*viśuddhātmā*—purified,

*parahita-rata*—engaged in the welfare of mankind,

*kāme akṣubhita-buddhi*—intelligence free from lust,

*danta*—restrained,

*akiñcana*—devoid of concept of ownership,

*mṛdu*—gentle,

*śuci*—clean,

*parimita-bhojī*—regulated eating and other habits,

*śāntamān*—peaceful,

*anīha*—apathy to materialism,

*dhṛimān*—patience,

*sthira*—steadiness,

*apramatta*—attentive, alert,

*sugambhira*—very grave,

*vijita-ṣaḍguṇa*—conquering over the six *gunas*, (hunger, thirst, lamentation, envy, old age and death),

*amānī*—not expecting honor from others,

*mānada*—giving respect to others,

*dakṣa*—skillful,

*avāñcaka*—nonhypocritical,

*jñānī*—knowledgeable of the scriptures.

By these characteristics one can know who is a *sādhu*. However, here there are two types of characteristics: principal and marginal. The principal characteristic is exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa, while all others are dependent upon it. By some good fortune one may get the association of Vaiṣṇavas, and then attain a taste for the name, chant the name and take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This becomes the chief characteristic, and by continuing to chant the name, all the other characteristics make their appearance. Therefore they are

called marginal or accompanying. Though secondary to the principal characteristic, they will certainly appear in the body of a true Vaiṣṇava or *sādhu*, as an effect of proper chanting of the holy name.

On the other hand, the status of *gṛhastha, brahmacārī, vānaprastha* and *sannyāsī, śūdra, vaiśya, kṣatriya* and *brāhmaṇa* of the *varṇāśrama* system, and their respective habits and qualities, are external distinctions which in no way determine who is a *sādhu*. The chief characteristic of a *sādhu* is his complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa, which is not dependent on a certain *varṇa* or *āśrama*.

Through the example of Raghunātha dāsa, Śrī Caitanya taught how the *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava should act. The married man should enter household life with a mind steadily fixed on service to Kṛṣṇa, not enamored by sense gratification, and in this way the householder can gradually cross the ocean of material existence. Instead of playing as a false renunciate *(markaṭa vairāgī)*, enjoying with the senses in the cloth of a *sannyāsī*, it is better to take only those things necessary for survival in the material world, while cultivating nonattachment. One should always be internally fixed on Kṛṣṇa, though externally one may act according to one's social custom in *varṇa* and *āśrama*. Kṛṣṇa quickly delivers such *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas.

When Raghunātha dāsa gave up household life, the Lord gave him instruction on the life of renunciation:

"One should neither listen to materialistic conversations, nor speak materialistic topics to others. One should not eat fancy food, or wear fancy clothing. One should always chant the holy name, respecting all, without expecting honor, and meditate on eternal service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja within one's mind."

"The principal characteristic is one, namely, surrender to Kṛṣṇa's name, which will prevail in all *sādhus*, no matter what *varṇa* or *āśrama*, *gṛhastha* or *sannyāsī*. However, according to *āśrama* or *varṇa*, the secondary characteristics will differ to some degree. And even if there appears some bad element or fault in a person, if he has the chief characteristic, surrender to Kṛṣṇa, he must be considered a *sādhu*, and to be respected and served by all. This is Kṛṣṇa's statement in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

"When one has developed a taste for chanting the pure name, it is said that chanting just one time will destroy the influence of all past sins. Some remnants of those sins may still remain, but they will completely vanish by the influence of the holy name. Since these traces of sin will quickly go, that person is known

as the most righteous person. Of course, if the materialist sees those traces of sin in a Vaiṣṇava *sādhu*, he may consider that the *sādhu* is just like a materialistic sinner. If he should criticize the *sādhu* because the *sādhu* has a trace of sin coming from previous sinful activity, he is committing *sādhu-nindā*. He is to be considered a rascal because of his fault of criticizing a Vaiṣṇava; and by this *nāma-aparādha* (offense unto one who has surrender to the name) he falls directly under the wrath of Kṛṣṇa.

"It is concluded that one who is solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa and sings His name is known as a *sādhu*. Other than the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, no one else is considered to be a *sādhu*. One who considers himself a *sādhu* is filled with material pride. But one who thinks himself to be the lowest rascal, humbly takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa and sings Kṛṣṇa's name, is the real *sādhu*. Knowing himself to be less than a blade of grass, considering himself like a tree of tolerance, not expecting honor for himself and giving honor to all other living entities, he chants the name and attains attraction for Kṛṣṇa.

"If a person of the above qualities chants the holy name even once, he is considered a Vaiṣṇava, and should be respected. The Vaiṣṇava is the friend and spiritual leader of the universe; he is an ocean of mercy to all living entities. Whoever criticizes such a Vaiṣṇava goes to hell birth after birth; for there is no path for real liberation other than *bhakti*, and *bhakti* is obtained only by the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.

"In the pure Vaiṣṇava resides Kṛṣṇa's energies of *bhakti*, *hlādinī* and *samvit*. Thus by contacting a Vaiṣṇava one can also receive Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. For this reason also, the food remnants, the foot water and the foot dust from the pure Vaiṣṇavas are three powerful articles for creating *bhakti*. If one stays near a pure Vaiṣṇava for some time, one can receive the *bhakti* energy flowing from his body. If one can bind that energy within one's heart, after having developed strong faith, *bhakti* will develop and one's body will begin to tremble in ecstasy. Thus, by living close to a Vaiṣṇava, soon devotion will appear in one's heart. First, such a person will begin chanting the holy name, and then, by the power of the name, he will receive all good qualities. This is the particular power of the *uttama adhikārī*.

"A Vaiṣṇava may be criticized on four counts: his caste by birth, previous sins or faults in this life, an unpremeditated accidental act of sin, and present traces of previous sinful activity. Though all these conditions may be present in a Vaiṣṇava, they are insubstantial grounds for criticism of a Vaiṣṇava. One who so blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava will be punished by Yamarāja. Because the Vaiṣṇava is

spreading the glories of the Lord's name, the Lord does not tolerate such criticism of a Vaiṣṇava. Giving up *dharma*, *yoga*, sacrifice and *jñāna* for the name of Kṛṣṇa, the Vaiṣṇava is the topmost person. Criticism is a serious offense. Furthermore he does not criticize the scriptures or the demigods, but simply takes shelter of the name.

"One should rather eagerly take the dust from the feet of a Vaiṣṇava, regardless of whether he is a *gṛhastha* or *sannyāsī*. One will treat him only according to his advancement as a Vaiṣṇava, which is based upon his degree of attraction to the holy name. Such things as caste or *āśrama*, wealth, learning, youthfulness, beauty, strength or number of followers are not factors.

"It goes without saying that one who has taken shelter of the name will not indulge in *sādhu-nindā*. One who criticizes a *sādhu* is not situated in *bhakti*, but in *aparādha* against *bhakti*. A serious person therefore would not indulge in criticism, but associate with, hear from and serve the *sādhu*.

"Because association with those who are not devotees is bound to produce disrespect for devotees *(sādhu-nindā)*, the devotee is careful to avoid such association. Materialistic association or *asat-saṅga* is of two types: association with women and association with those devoid of devotion to the Lord. Association with women means associating with women not according to Vedic tradition. This association with women which is not authorized by scripture is divided into association with women outside of marriage for the purpose of sex life and association within marriage where one is controlled by one's wife. Thus, only if one is married according to prescribed rules and is following the rules for married life, in which the wife is submissive to the husband and the husband acts as a *sādhu*, is the association considered bona fide. Other types of association are considered *asat*.

"The second type of *asat* association, association with nondevotees, is of three types: association with māyāvādīs, association with pretenders, and association with atheists. Māyāvādīs believe that the Lord and the *jīvas* are both temporary entities, and that the Lord's *mūrtī* form is material. The pretenders, though without genuine devotion or renunciation, pretend to be devotees to make a living. The atheists do not believe in any form of God. Now these people may claim to be devotees, and may be accepted by the public as such, but if one rejects such people, it is not considered *sādhu-nindā*. Furthermore, one who criticizes a person who gives up these *asat* people should also be rejected and avoided. Therefore, the serious devotee who gives up *asat-saṅga*, which causes

*sādhu-nindā*, and exclusively takes shelter in the name, will certainly receive the treasure of prema.

"It may be observed that in order to proceed properly to *prema*, one must be able to distinguish the devotee from the nondevotee. For one must avoid the *aparādha* of criticizing the devotee and seek his association, and simultaneously reject the nondevotee completely. One must furthermore be able to distinguish the types of Vaiṣṇavas according to their spiritual advancement. These are of three types: the materialistic Vaiṣṇava or *Vaiṣṇava-prāya* (almost a Vaiṣṇava) is he who has mediocre faith in Kṛṣṇa but has no service attitude to *sādhus*. Actually, such a person is not a Vaiṣṇava but the dim image of a Vaiṣṇava, *Vaiṣṇava-ābhāsa*. However, if he is not a Vaiṣṇava, how will he be permitted to associate with Vaiṣṇavas, who do not associate with non-Vaiṣṇavas? Therefore, this person is considered to be at the beginning stage of a Vaiṣṇava, *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava, upon whom the actual fixed-up Vaiṣṇavas will bestow mercy so that he becomes purified.

"The next higher stage of Vaiṣṇava is the *madhyama-bhakta*, who can recognize the important position of the Lord's devotees and thus always associates with them. In faith he is convinced of Kṛṣṇa's position as the Lord, the *jīvas* as His eternal servants, the process as *bhakti* and the goal as *prema*. He shows mercy to the innocent, those who have a little faith, the *kaniṣṭha-bhaktas*, by giving them *sambandha-jñāna*. And he avoids the enemies, *asat-saṅga*, understanding the different effects of the different types of association. Even at this stage of *madhyama-bhakta*, one is considered a pure Vaiṣṇava, with the qualification of taking the real holy name, not *nāmābhāsa*. As a real Vaiṣṇava he is able to distinguish a Vaiṣṇava from a non-Vaiṣṇava, so that he may avoid *asat-saṅga* and *sādhu-nindā* and serve the advanced devotees. Actually he must do this for his own advancement.

"He who experiences Kṛṣṇa as the life and soul of everything, and thus sees Kṛṣṇa situated in everything, and consequently does not make distinction between Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava, but simply engages in relishing the nectar of the holy name, is called the *uttama* Vaiṣṇava, the most advanced devotee.

"The *kaniṣṭha-bhakta* performs his devotional service at the stage of *nāmābhāsa*, whereas the *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava is actually qualified for the real holy name, and can understand and discern the various offenses in chanting the holy name. The *uttama* adhikārī is above committing offense, as he sees Kṛṣṇa expanded everywhere.

"It can be seen that it is important for the practitioner of *bhakti*—whether a *kaniṣṭha* or *madhyama bhakta—to* understand in his performance of *sādhana*, his own position in devotional service according to his internal purity. By doing this one can avoid nondevotees *(asat-saṅga)*, and by this one can advance further. Therefore it is important that one come to the position of *madhyama bhakta*, one who is qualified to make these distinctions. The typical activities of a real devotee *(madhyama bhakta)* are to avoid *sādhu-nindā* and to take association of *sādhus*, serve *sādhus* and give knowledge to the innocent *jīvas*, while performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

"Being overcome with the material modes, if one commits the offense of blasphemy against a devotee, one should sincerely feel repentent and cry at the feet of that devotee for mercy and forgiveness. The devotee, who is by nature very merciful, will forgive the offender."

Haridāsa concluded, "According to Your order, Lord, I have discussed the first offense. This I offer to Your lotus feet."

That person who, like a bumble bee, lingers at the lotus feet of Haridāsa, will receive the touchstone of the holy name as his life and soul.

# Chapter 5 - Worshiping the Demigods as Independent of Kṛṣṇa

*jaya gadādhara-prāṇa jāhnavā-jīvana*
*jaya sītānātha jaya gaura-bhakta-gaṇa*

Haridāsa spoke with folded hands, "Now hear about the second offense, O Lord of the universe.

First he clarified the position of Viṣṇu. “Viṣṇu is the supreme principle, not subject to the duality of the material world. He is a form full of consciousness and knowledge, existing eternally beyond the modes of material nature, although being the absolute controller of the material world. Kṛṣṇa in Goloka is the original and supreme Viṣṇu form, being ornamented with sixty-four transcendental qualities to enhance His blissful activities by which He performs His activities. The *puruṣa-avatāras* and other plenary *avatāras* all possess these

sixty qualities in order to carry out their function.

"Kṛṣṇa expands as two types of conscious particles. The first is the ordinary *jīva*, who has fifty qualities to some degree. The second are the demigods, who have the same fifty qualities but to a greater degree. In addition, Śiva possesses five more qualities. Viṣṇu has all these qualities plus five more which are not found in other living entities. In this way we can see that Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, with sixty qualities, is the Lord, and Śiva and the demigods are His servants. Greater than the ordinary *jīvas* are the demigods and Śiva, and greater than Śiva is Viṣṇu, who is the Lord of the jīvas and the Lord of the demigods. Therefore, whoever considers Viṣṇu on the same level as the demigods is very ignorant.

"Some people claim that the Brahman without qualities takes on qualities when it expands as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. However, the conclusion of scripture is that Nārāyaṇa is supreme, and is the cause of Brahmā and Śiva. Whoever rejects Viṣṇu as the supreme controller and takes to worship of demigods, falls into the world of illusion.

"Other people claim that since Viṣṇu is all pervading throughout the universe and is present in the demigods as well, one can worship Viṣṇu by worshiping all the demigods. But this is not the ruling in the scriptures. Rather, this type of activity is forbidden. By worshiping Viṣṇu all other worship is perfected. Just as by giving water to the root of a tree the branches become satisfied; by worshiping Viṣṇu exclusively, all worship is covered. This is the Vedic conclusion, but unfortunately, the fools reject this precept. Under the influence of māyāvādī philosophy, the living entities of Kali-yuga put Viṣṇu on the same level as the demigods. In truth, however, the demigods give only limited result, whereas worship of Viṣṇu yields all results. If the materialists can understand this truth, they will take to Viṣṇu worship and achieve all results.

"How should a householder in the *varṇāśrama* system act? Generally he should give up worrying about inferior obligations and simply worship Kṛṣṇa. In other words, in all the *saṁskāras* from insemination to funeral rites, Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped, using appropriate mantras from the Vedas. One should worship the Vaiṣṇavas and Viṣṇu directly and worship the forefathers by giving them *prasāda* from Viṣṇu. To directly worship the demigods as the māyāvādīs do will only shorten one's life. To think that the demigods are independent of Viṣṇu is an offense. Since the demigods take their existence from Viṣṇu, in them one cannot find full perfection. Even the controlling powers of Brahmā, Gaṇeśa and Sūrya come from Kṛṣṇa. They do not have independent power.

Therefore the *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava should recognize one supreme Lord Viṣṇu, and regard the demigods as His dependent energies. Thus the *gṛhastha*, though following the rules and customs prescribed in his caste, will give up all those rules which include demigod worship, aimed at sense gratification, and hold firmly to the path of bhakti, worshiping Him alone in all cases where worship is prescribed.

"In this way the *gṛhastha*, with his mind fixed on devotion to Kṛṣṇa, will perform the *saṁskāras* of his caste, satisfy the ancestors by Viṣṇu *prasāda* offerings, and offer oblations to the demigods by recognizing them as the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and then taking *prasāda* himself. He knows that by worshiping Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇava all results are attained. Thus he always chants the holy name, being careful to avoid offenses such as the second *aparādha*.

"The question may arise why one should follow the *varṇāśrama* system at all. The answer is that everyone who has taken a human birth must follow this system. By this scientific arrangement of society, the general masses of people can attain to their full capacity according to their individual nature and gradually attain devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Those outside the *varṇāśrama* system should be made to give up all bad habits and begin practicing as *śūdras*. This must be the path for civilized society to carry on life.

"The worship of Kṛṣṇa is an essential part of the *varṇāśrama* system. If the four *varṇas* carry out life according to the rules of their particular caste but do not worship Kṛṣṇa, then they simply go to hell. Particularly the *gṛhastha* must follow the rules of his *varṇa* in performing his worldly activities of raising family and relating with the rest of society, but at the same time, according to his means, he must worship Kṛṣṇa. And he must respect and follow these rules as long as he has not come to the platform where the rules hamper his progress in worshiping Kṛṣṇa. This is the platform technically known as *bhāva*. In that state the *jīva* develops *sādhana bhakti*, in which the inspiration to perform devotional activities comes directly from the taste experienced by the pure *jīva*. This goal will eventually be achieved by the *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava who accepts Viṣṇu as supreme.

"There is one other offense derived from not accepting Viṣṇu as the supreme, one without a second, or *advaya-tattva*. Being the *advaya-tattva*, Viṣṇu, by His inconceivable energies, possesses inherently name, form and qualities which cannot be considered separate from Him. To consider the name,

etc. as different from the Lord is to consider the Lord and the name on a material level. This concept of duality is offensive. At the stage of *nāmābhāsa* one may hold this conception unconsciously from lack of knowledge or faith, but it is impossible to hold this conception at the stage of *prema*. This anartha can be removed by the mercy of the bona fide *guru* who will guide the practitioner in *sādhana bhakti* so that the *śuddha-nāma*, the pure name, is revealed.

"By material speculation one can bring about this concept of duality in the Lord, and it can become a serious offense which is difficult to remove. Thus, in the case of the māyāvādīs, holding to this concept is an *aparādha*. The māyāvādīs claim that the impersonal Brahman is the supreme truth, without variety, character or energies, without form or beauty, without change or activity, simply pure existence. For them, the name and form of Viṣṇu are creations of *māyā*, the material energy of illusion. When a person can overcome illusion, then Viṣṇu simply merges into the impersonal Brahman, losing individual identity. This is all simply bad logic, based on atheism. To claim that the Supreme Truth is without all inconceivable transcendental energies, or is unable to possess character, is madness. There may be some confusion of what to call the Supreme Truth—Brahman or Viṣṇu—but in either case, the highest realization must be God with energies and personality. That is the Vedic conclusion.

"Actually Viṣṇu has both features in Himself: *nirviśeṣa* and *saviśeṣa*, without variety and with variety. This is possible by the inconceivable power of God, the Supreme Powerful. All opposites are assimilated without difficulty. By this inconceivable power the Supreme One can exist with variety, beauty and *līlā*.

"Of course, the *jīva*, being naturally of small intelligence as a particle of God, cannot fully understand the nature of the Lord's inconceivable power. In the attempt to establish a concept of the Supreme Truth by his own intelligence, the *jīva* takes shelter of material logic and accepts the secondary feature of the Lord, or impersonal Brahman, which is a state of unity and peace, as the supreme. By rejecting the lotus feet of Viṣṇu, who is worshiped by the higher beings or demigods, and by then being bound up in a state of Brahman, he cannot distinguish what is good or bad for his own welfare.

"But a person who can understand that the Absolute Truth can exist with form and variety in a pure transcendental state, can properly see that Viṣṇu, His name and qualities are all one and inseparable from Him. This concept of Kṛṣṇa

with personality is actual knowledge. With this understanding one can take to chanting the holy name, knowing that it is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Thus one must avoid the offense of thinking materially that Viṣṇu and His name, form, etc. are different, and of thinking that other living entities, such as the demigods, have an existence separate from Viṣṇu.

"To summarize, whoever is solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa simply worships Kṛṣṇa and gives up all other worship. He does not criticize the demigods or the scriptures which support the worship of the demigods, but respects the demigods as the servants of Kṛṣṇa. Some scriptures may establish demigods as supreme to establish belief in different categories of human beings, in order to raise them through regulation to the point of coming to faith in Kṛṣṇa and *bhakti*. The true Vaiṣṇava will see the function of the demigods and their respective scriptures in proper perspective. Criticism of Kṛṣṇa's servants, the demigods, is also offensive.

"Since it is obligatory for the householder to worship the demigods according to his caste, he will worship the demigods and forefathers by offering them the remnants from their Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, when the devotee sees the *mūrtī* of a demigod, he will pay respects to the demigod, seeing the demigod as a Vaiṣṇava. However the devotee will not accept the *prasāda* remnants of an offering that a māyāvādī has made to Viṣṇu. Because the māyāvādī's chanting and worship are both offensive, the Lord never accepts his offering. Also to accept offerings made directly to the demigods is an offense to Viṣṇu and obstructs the path of pure devotional service. But by worshiping Kṛṣṇa, the real devotee will give the demigods the Lord's *prasāda* out of respect. Such worship, and receiving such prasāda, is not offensive. In this way, the devotee avoids the second offense in chanting the name, and by continuing this process correctly, he achieves love of God.

"If by accident, one should happen to turn from accepting Viṣṇu as supreme, one should be repentent and take shelter of Viṣṇu and be careful not to commit the offense again. By remembering Kṛṣṇa, by remembering His name and chanting His name, the offense will disappear. According to the Vedic literature, there is no *prāyaścitta* (reformatory process or atonement) more effective than this. This is because the Lord is an ocean of mercy and an ocean of forgiveness. Similarly, the devotee also forgives past faults."

Haridāsa concluded, "One should avoid association with those who worship demigods as supreme and rather worship the Vaiṣṇavas, who take Kṛṣṇa as the

supreme. In this way, one can avoid the second offense."

For one who performs his devotions at the feet of Haridāsa, the touchstone of the holy name, the name becomes his very life and soul.

## Chapter 6 - Disregarding the Guru

*pañca-tattva jaya jaya śrī rādhā-mādhava*
*jaya navadvīpa-vraja-yamunā-vaiṣṇava*

Haridāsa said, "O Lord, now I will tell you how the third offense occurs. According to Your order, I will describe in detail all the offenses that occur from disobeying the *guru*.

"Having wandered from one body to another in 8,400,000 species of life, through unintentional pious activity the *jīva* obtains a human body. The human body is a rare opportunity because only in this form can the living entity perform devotional service properly. As a demigod, one has the tendency to enjoy, and as a lower animal, one has no capacity for knowledge. But in the human form the living entity can progress back to his constitutional position with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore if one does not take care to attain Kṛṣṇa in this temporary body, one will die and obtain some other body, losing the opportunity to escape from the material prison. The intelligent person, having attained a human birth in this world, will take shelter of a spiritual master who will act as a captain to guide the *jīva* over the ocean of material nature with the instructions of *bhakti-yoga*. This is the importance of the guru.

"One should approach the qualified guru, that person who is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and has conquered over the senses, and inquire submisively from him. Being satisfied with his answers, the *jīva* takes initiation from him and thus crosses over the material ocean. Having attraction for Kṛṣṇa, he will give up useless material logic, take shelter of higher knowledge and receive *mantra* initiation from the spiritual master.

"One who is a gṛhastha should accept a guru but remain in his duties of *varṇāśrāma*. If a *brāhmaṇa* is a Kṛṣṇa devotee, he can serve as a guru for the *varṇas*; but if there is no suitable person of *brāhmaṇa* birth, one can receive initiation from a *guru* of another *varṇa*. If there is a choice, the *gṛhastha* should

choose the bona fide *guru* of higher caste. But in any case the main qualification by which to judge who is suitable bona fide *guru* is how much the *guru* knows about Kṛṣṇa. He may be *brāhmaṇa* or *śūdra*, householder or *sannyāsī*, but this makes no difference in the guru's ability to deliver the *jīva*. This should be the main consideration in choosing a guru, if one desires to progress to pure attraction for Kṛṣṇa. In other words, if there is a qualified *guru* of high caste, there is no necessity of seeking a *guru* of a lower caste; but if the high caste *guru* is not qualified as a Kṛṣṇa *bhakta*, one should not take *dīkṣā* from him on the basis of his high caste alone. Rather, one should take a qualified *guru* of a lower caste. The qualification of knowing Kṛṣṇa and being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is the important consideration.

"In the case of a householder who cannot find proper spiritual life in the *gṛhastha āśrāma*, he should take a bona fide *guru* who is not a householder. In other words, if one renounces household life and is seeking spiritual guidance, one should take shelter of an *ācārya* who has successfully renounced household life and receive *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* from him in order to reach the desired goal of *prema*. But if the householder had a qualified *guru* previously, that previous *guru* should not be disrespected or rejected. He should be honored always.

"The householder may take a *guru* who is either a householder or renounced. Either is suitable. Accepting *guru* and performing *sādhana-bhakti*, the householder will eventually achieve the stage of *bhāva*, at which time his attraction for family life and sense gratification will cease. At that stage he will naturally give up household life and enter the renounced order. This person should seek out an *ācārya* in the renounced order and take his instruction.

"*Guru* may be of two types: one who gives *dīkṣā* with *mantra* and one who gives spiritual instruction. They should be considered equal in importance by one who wants to advance quickly. A person can accept only one *dīkṣā guru*, but may have many *śikṣā* gurus, who give *sambandha-jñāna*.

"The *sambandha-jñāna* or teachings are handed down in a *sampradāya* from the founder-*ācārya* of the *sampradāya*. These original teachings and the founder-*ācārya* of the *sampradāya* should be worshiped with all respect. One should be loyal to his conclusions and instructions, not taking teachings from others. One should take as *śikṣā* guru only a person who is following faithfully the teachings of that founder-*ācārya*. To take initiation or teachings from a māyāvādī is useless.

"Whoever takes or accepts such unauthorized teachings simply goes to hell.

Rejecting Kṛṣṇa and learning anti-Kṛṣṇa philosophy can only lead to ruination of one's life. How can a person be *guru* and deliver others, not having achieved or being able to achieve perfection himself?

"Thus *guru*, whether *śikṣā* or *dīkṣā*, must be the servant of Kṛṣṇa, and an associate of the Lord eternally in Vṛndāvana, who has been especially empowered by Kṛṣṇa. One should serve the *guru* with great devotion, knowing Him to be directly empowered by Kṛṣṇa, the dearmost servant of Kṛṣṇa, and one's own eternal spiritual guide. By such sincere service to the *guru* one can cross over the material ocean.

"What is the procedure for worshiping the *guru*? First one should worship the *guru* (offering *pādya*, *arghya*, etc.), then, taking his permission, worship the Lord. Then one should offer Kṛṣṇa's *prasāda* to the *guru*, the Vaiṣṇavas, the demigods and the forefathers. With the *guru* in mind, one should worship Kṛṣṇa, and with the *guru* in mind, one should chant Kṛṣṇa's name.

"Consequently, if one disobeys or disrespects the *guru*, that is offensive, and will block one's progress in *bhakti*. As in the case of showing proper respect and devotion to the *sādhu* and to Kṛṣṇa, similarly, by properly serving the *guru* and chanting the holy name one can get quick success. Having firm faith in the *guru*, one can, by the strength of the pure name, attain the goal of prema.

"When should a *guru* be rejected? It may happen that through *asat-saṅga* a *guru* may lose his qualifications. Starting as a big *guru*, by committing *nama-aparādha* he loses his knowledge. By offending other Vaiṣṇavas he loses the taste for the name and gradually falls under the control of wealth and women. Such a *guru* should be rejected. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, that disciple will obtain a new bona fide *guru* and take up pure chanting of the name again.

"If a *guru* takes unsuitable people for disciples, he will have to suffer for that, and if a disciple takes an unqualified *guru*, he will accordingly suffer. In order to avoid these misfortunes, one should be cautious. On the other hand, as long as both *guru* and disciple are properly qualified, the relationship will continue. Ideally, this relationship is eternal, but if the disciple becomes bad, the *guru* must reject him, and if the *guru* becomes bad, the disciple must reject him. Otherwise both may fall; better one than both.

"In order to prevent the pain of having to reject one's guru, one should first carefully examine him to see if he is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Even in receiving a material article, one examines it for quality. Once having accepted a qualified

guru, if one disobeys his instruction, one commits a grave offense. By that even the demigods can fall down to hell.

"How should the *guru* be respected? The guru's bed and seat, his shoes, car, water from washing his feet, and his image should be respected. If one fails to respect them or worships someone else as *guru* in the guru's presence, that is devious mentality, trying to minimize the bona fide *guru*. One should regard the *guru* as one's lord and master, obey his words and instructions, and when seeing him, fall flat on the ground. One should loudly glorify the *guru*, never disobey his order, take his *prasāda* remnants, and not discuss anything that the *guru* dislikes. Surrendering oneself humbly at the guru's feet, one should act so that he is pleased. If one acts in this way, and performs Kṛṣṇa *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, one will gain all perfections. That is the statement of the Vedas.

"The *guru* will give proper teachings concerning the holy name, and after having established faith in the holy name in a person's heart, he will formally give him the name of Kṛṣṇa or a *mantra* containing the name of Kṛṣṇa to chant as his *sādhana*. This is *dīkṣā*. If by bad association or contact with bogus literature one happens to reject or disrespect such a bona fide *nāma-dīkṣā-guru*, one should immediately give up the bad association and literature and in sorrow approach the feet of one's *guru*. Being all-merciful, the *guru* will reinstate him, and by again chanting sincerely, he will attain *prema*."

That person who, thinking himself lower than a blade of grass, aspires for the dust from the feet of Haridāsa Nāmācārya, will be qualified to sing always the touchstone of the holy name.

## Chapter 7 - Criticism of Scripture

*jaya jaya gadāi gaurāṅga nityānanda*
*jaya sītāpati jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

Haridāsa spoke, "Lord, the fourth offense is criticism of scripture. This offense will also obstruct one's *bhakti*.

"Scripture means the four Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas. Having emanated from the breathing of Kṛṣṇa, they constitute perfect knowledge and authority. Particularly in spiritual matters these must be referred to as the final

proof. Because the material senses of man, characterized by the four faults of *karaṇa-pāṭava* (limited perception), *bhrāma* (illusion), *vipralīpsa* (desire to report something other than what is perceived) and *pramada* (inattention of the senses), cannot possibly perceive anything beyond the material level of unconscious matter, the spiritual realm would be unapproachable without the aid of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa has given the four Vedas, which are beyond the four faults of the senses, and by these alone can man progress towards the spiritual goal.

"What are the contents of the scriptures? The wise man will understand that *karma* and *jñāna* are secondary and worthless as independent processes and that the path of *bhakti* is the essence. The Vedas stand as the authoritative guide and reference *(pramāṇa)* and they prove nine different topics, which may be classified into *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. By these ten principles—the Vedic authority and the nine topics which the Vedas prove—ignorance is destroyed and transcendental knowledge is revealed.

"These nine principles may be summarized as follows:

1. There is one Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu.

2. The Lord is possessor of all energies.

3. Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all rasas and is situated in His *dhāma* where He eternally gives joy to the *jīvas*.

4. The *jīvas* are particles of the Lord, unlimited in number, infinitesimal in size, but conscious.

5. Some *jīvas* are eternally bound in the material universes, being attracted by illusory pleasure.

6. Some *jīvas* are eternally liberated and engaged in worshiping Kṛṣṇa; they reside with Him as associates in the spiritual sky and experience *prema*.

7. Kṛṣṇa exists with His energies—the material energy, *jīva* energy and spiritual energy—in a state of simultaneous identity and differentiation, permeating all, yet remaining aloof, which is only possible by His inconceivable power *(acintya-bhedābheda-tattva)*.

8. The process specifically mentioned *(abhidheya)* for the *jīva* in the Vedas is the nine-fold process of devotional service, divided into *vaidhi* and *rāga-bhakti*. Of the nine processes, the hearing and chanting of the holy name are principal

means. That is the reason the chanting of *'oṁ'* is glorified in the Vedas.

9. The final goal or constitutional platform *(prayojana)* of the *jīvas* is the activity of pure *bhakti (prema)*. This is attained by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

"These are the basic principles for the guidance of the *jīvas* which are denoted by the Vedas. If one criticizes the Vedas, that is an offense to the holy name. Such a person is a low rascal.

"In the history of India there are six personalities who invented theories, and by their inventions they simply brought themselves to no good end. *Jaimini*, though claiming to follow the Vedas, does not recognize the Supreme Lord and recommends *karma-kānda* activity independent of worship of God. By concoction, Kapila thinks that the Lord is imperfect and recommends the process of yoga, without understanding its goal. Taking shelter of the philosophy that everything is illusion, the Jainas preach against the Vedas. The atheist Carvaka had no respect for the Vedic knowledge; and similarly, the Buddhist, Gautama, does not worship the Lord, but instead thinks in terms of human beings. All these philosophies are against the Vedas, sometimes directly and sometimes in a hidden way. Therefore the wise man, knowing that belief in these philosophies makes one an offender, completely avoids them.

"One other philosophy to be avoided is that of the māyāvādīs. Their scriptures are not genuine, but are distortions of the meaning of the Vedas. Actually they are covered Buddhism, and are meant to mislead the foolish people in the Kali-yuga. On the order of the Lord, Śiva appeared in a brāhmaṇa family and became an *ācārya*. Then, like Jaimini, while taking authority from the Vedas, twisted the meaning to delude the world. He took the Buddhist doctrine of illusion and tried to delude the world. By doing this, he covered the direct meaning of the Vedas and the process of *bhakti*. Thus if one accepts any of these philosophies, there is no place for real *bhakti*. If one takes the holy name along with these philosophies, one is committing serious offense to the name. One simply brings about one's own end.

"If the *jīva* can accept the direct meaning of the Vedas, which is the path of pure *bhakti*, he will be rewarded with the sweetness of *prema*, but if he takes indirect meaning or metaphorical interpretations as the real meaning, he cannot come to truth and dies of his offense to Kṛṣṇa. The principal sound in the Vedas is '*oṁ*,' which is a name of Kṛṣṇa, and by chanting the name one can achieve the goal of life. This name is utilized by the devotees in the Śrī sampradāya. The Vedas state that the holy name is the spiritual form of the Lord in the material

world. It is so powerful that even the faint influence of the name can bring about perfection.

"The purport is this. Since the Vedas are teaching chanting of the pure name as the principal process, to criticize the Vedas is to criticize the name. That is offensive. The devotees, however, take shelter of the Vedas, and by chanting the holy name, attain the nectar of the name. The Vedas are saying, 'Just chant the name of the Lord and by that you will receive the highest form of love and bliss.' Even in the spiritual sky the great personalities are chanting the holy name.

"It is unfortunate that in Kali-yuga even so-called great personalities avoid the Supreme Personality of Kṛṣṇa and His nectarean name, and instead worship the illusory energy, *māyā devī*. By taking shelter of the tamasic *tantra*, they criticize the Vedic authority. Lustful for meat and intoxication, leading a corrupt life against *dharma*, these people kill themselves. They do not take the name of Kṛṣṇa nor do they get the eternal *dhāma* of Vṛndāvana. Māyā devī gives the atheists worldly happiness or punishment according to their activities, but to one who serves the devotees, she gives the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Being Kṛṣṇa servant, she punishes the erring *jīvas* and gives only illusory happiness to those who worship her. But if one worships Kṛṣṇa and His name, she helps him overcome the material ocean.

"If by misfortune or accident it happens that one commits *Śruti-nindana*, one should be repentent and offer his respect to the scriptures. With attention one should offer flowers and Tulasī leaves to the *Bhāgavatarn* and the Vedas. Being the essence of the Vedas and an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will give unlimited mercy.

Haridāsa said, "Day and night I am immersed in this ocean of nectar of the holy name, having given up the offense of criticizing the scripture."

Whoever aspires for the dust of the feet of Haridāsa is qualified to wear on his neck the touchstone jewel of the holy name.

## Chapter 8 - Interpreting the Holy Name

*jaya gaura-gadādhara, śrī-rādhā-mādhava*
*jaya gaura-līlā-sthālī-jāhnavī-vaiṣṇava*

Haridāsa spoke, "O son of Śacī, the fifth offense is giving interpretations to the name and its glories.

"The *Smṛtis* or *Purāṇas* glorify the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, stating that if one should chant the name either in negligence or in faith, Kṛṣṇa will show that person great mercy. 'Mere is no knowledge as pure as the name; there is no vow as powerful as the name. There is no meditation more effective than the name nor is there any fruit greater than that attained by the name. There is no greater renunciation than the name; there is no greater peace than the name. In this world there is no greater pious activity than taking the name, nor is there any quicker progress than in the name. The name is the highest liberation, the highest freedom, the highest destination, the highest peace, the point of no more searching. The name is the highest devotion, the name is the purest inclination of the *jīva*, the name is the highest love, and direct remembrance of the Lord. The name is the cause of all causes, the Supreme Lord, most worshipable, and is a form of *guru* to bring one to the Lord.

"It is stated that one thousand names of Viṣṇu are equivalent to one name of Rāma, and three names of Rāma are equivalent to one name of Kṛṣṇa. The Vedas say that the holy name is purely spiritual and thus they constantly glorify the name. One who minimizes the effects of chanting the holy name as stated in the Vedas and Purāṇas is an extreme offender. The rascal who commits *arthavāda* against the name is doomed to rot away in hell. Some people say that the results of the holy name that are stated in the scriptures are not true but only meant to attract one to the name. But those persons, due to lack of *bhakti-sukṛti*, lacking faith, cannot understand the real purport of the scriptures or the greatest welfare of mankind. Instead they will take the opposite interpretation.

"Because the *karma-kānda* section of the Vedas is meant to satisfy one's selfish desire for material gain, for motivation's sake many tempting results are offered. However, in the process of pure *bhakti*, the candidate practices unselfishness, for the goal of *bhakti* is unmotivated service to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, although the statements concerning the holy name are not exaggeration meant to motivate but are the true effects of the name, the devotee does not take the name for his own material enjoyment. He does not ask for the fruits mentioned in the scriptures.

"If one performs the sacrifices prescribed in *karma-kānda* with the desire for material gain, that is called cheating. If one has desire and faith in the happiness of material objects, one will ask for material results from a sacrifice. But if one can execute one's activities without interest in these material results, one's heart will become purified. That is the actual purpose of the *karma-kānda*. When one's heart is purified, one's interest and taste for culturing *bhakti* begins. By chanting the holy name *bhakti* develops and matures. Thus it can be seen that the end result of *karma-kānda* is to come to taste the holy name, at least if those activities are done properly. The results one can obtain from chanting the name are far beyond anything one can obtain by wandering in any of the fourteen planetary systems. Indeed the results from the holy name are incomparable. But how can a *karmī* or *jñānī* obtain these results with their offensive attitude?

"Just by *nāmābhāsa* one can get all the results obtained by the processes of *karma* and *jñāna*. If such results can be obtained by *nāmābhāsa*, is there need to doubt the great benefit one will get by chanting the pure name? All the glories of the name that are recited in the scriptures are accepted as fact by the sincere *bhakta*. The low class men do not accept this, however, and by their doubting commit offense, which leads them to certain ruin. From the beginning to the end of the Vedas, the *Rāmāyāṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, the name is glorified. To minimize and interpret these glories, which are clearly stated by the authority of the Vedas, will yield no good result.

"The Lord and the Lord's name are one, for the Lord has invested in the name all His transcendental energies. Thus He has made chanting of the holy name the supreme process. As the Lord is completely independent and full of all energies, He has by His will invested in *karma-kānda* activities His material energy, and in *brahma-jñāna*, His *nirvāṇa* energy. But in the holy name He has invested all energies with all results. Why argue about why and how? The Lord can do what He wants. Therefore the intelligent, learned man will not yield to interpreting the glorious name.

"If one happens to commit *arthavāda*, he should humbly go before an assembly of Vaiṣṇavas who engage in discussions about Kṛṣṇa and reveal his offense at their feet, begging sincerely for forgiveness. The devotees of the Lord, conversant with all the glories of the holy name, will mercifully forgive him and embrace him. The offense of interpreting or concocting will not occur again. If one happens to talk with one of these offenders, one should immediately, without taking off one's clothes, bathe in the Ganges for purification. If any pure water is not available, one should mentally purify one's self."

He who has faith in the mercy of Kṛṣṇa's dearest Śrī Rādhā, wears this *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi* as a necklace.

## Chapter 9 - Committing Sin on the Strength of the Name

*gaura-gadādhara jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*jaya jaya sītādvaita jaya bhakta-gaṇa*

Haridāsa spoke on the power of the name to eradicate sinful activities:

"If the *jīva* takes shelter of the pure name, which is *śuddha-sattva* or transcendental and pure at all times, quickly all the *anarthas*, including weakness of the heart, will go away. When one becomes fixed in the holy name, one will no longer think of committing sin and the effects of past sins will no longer influence one. This is due to purification of the heart.

"Sin may be analyzed in three stages. A sinful act is the final stage. This is caused by a seed of sin, or a desire to sin. That desire or seed originates in ignorance, which is the root cause. All three are considered as causes of the suffering of the *jīva*. However, Kṛṣṇa is merciful, always looking to the welfare of His parts and parcels; not being able to bear the sufferings of the *jīvas*, He always tries to help them. Thus, by the process of *bhakti*, the thirst for material stimulation or the lust of the senses, leaves the heart. One is able to look with contempt on the endeavor to acquire a beautiful woman or wealth. One lives satisfied with one's constitutional service to the Lord. The devotee accepts everything favorable to the development of *bhakti* and rejects everything unfavorable to *bhakti*; he regards Kṛṣṇa alone as his protector and maintainer and gives up all ideas of the selfish concept of "I and mine." Thinking himself very low and worthless, the devotee will continuously chant the holy name. Whoever takes shelter of the name in this way can neither think nor do any sinful activity.

"It is guaranteed that quickly one will be purified from all sinful influence. However, inevitably there is a period between sinful life and the pure state and in this interim period there may be some relation with past sin, that is, some diminishing trace of sin. However, new sin is not being committed and the past sin is quickly dissipating. The more one engages in the holy name, the quicker

that sinful odor will vanish. Kṛṣṇa promised Arjuna that He would never let His devotee fall into trouble. Since trouble is caused by sin, Kṛṣṇa mercifully takes away all sin from the devotee. Only with great trouble is the *jñānī* able to control sin, but without Kṛṣṇa's shelter, quickly he will fall from his spotless position. Therefore, as scripture concludes, only by taking shelter of the Lord in *bhakti* is safety guaranteed.

"Even if by accident a devotee happens to commit a sin, he does not resort to the purificatory rites of *prāyaścitta* and *karma-kānda*. That sin is temporary and by chanting it will be washed away, leaving no influence. However, there is another type of sin. If someone intentionally commits a new sin out of lust, thinking that there will be no bad effect because of the name's power in destroying sins, that person is not a serious devotee but is known as a cheater. From his offense against the name he will reap lamentation, fear and death. Thus, two types of sinful activities may be distinguished: an unpremeditated sin and a premeditated sin. There is a gross difference between the two according to scripture.

"In the case of ordinary sin, one can counteract it by *prāyaścitta*, but if one even thinks of committing sin on the strength of the holy name, there is no remedial measure, so serious is the offense. Even endless torture by the servants of Yamarāja cannot deliver him from the offense. And if thinking of committing the offense to the name brings such suffering, how much more will be the suffering from actually committing such an act?

"An example is given. In scripture one hears that the holy name removes the effects of more sins than one can commit in ten million lifetimes. In countless places the scriptures state that by *nāmābhāsa*. all five types of sin, even the greatest sin, can be removed. A person of a cheating mentality, hearing this information, will with ill motive start chanting the holy name. In the same way, a person may give up regular work as difficult and take the cloth of a renunciate, but still associate with women and wealth for sense gratification. Using the position of an advanced renunciate as a means of enjoying as a householder is a great disturbance to the social order and the universe at large. Either as a householder or as a renunciate, there is no impediment to taking the holy name and perfecting one's life, provided one carries out his devotions according to the rules without offense. But to have the idea of committing sin under the shelter of the name is a great offense, which will block the path of *bhakti*.

"One who is at the *nāmābhāsa* stage, by bad association, is always in danger of committing this offense; but one who has *śuddha-nāma* does not commit this *aparādha*. Those who have taken shelter of the pure name do not at any time in any form come near to committing any of the ten *aparādhas*. However, as long as one does not have the pure name, there is every danger of onslaught of offenses, and therefore the person in *nāmābhāsa* should be aware of the mentality of committing sin on the strength of the holy name. Those who have the shelter of the pure name always live in association of pure Vaiṣṇavas and are vigilant to avoid offenses. They have a mind determined not to move from thought of Kṛṣṇa, not even for a moment. But one not in this status should live in fear of offenses, particularly the offense of committing sin on the strength of the name. This person should constantly chant the Lord's name, and by the grace of the guru, get *sambandha jñāna*, which will in turn give him real Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* and real Kṛṣṇa *nāma*.

If by fate one commits this offense, one should purify himself by association with pure Vaiṣṇavas. Sinful desires are like thieves on the road to *bhakti*, and the pure Vaiṣṇavas are the protectors of the road. Loudly call out the name of the protector; when the protector comes, the thief flees. Say that name in love and do not fear, for remember that the Lord has said, 'I am your protector."'

Whoever vows to exclusively serve the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, thinking himself the lowest of the low, gets to sing the touchstone of the holy name.

## Chapter 10 - Giving the Name to the Unfaithful

*gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*sītādvaita jaya śrīvāsādi bhakta-gaṇa*

Haridāsa, with folded hands, spoke on the next *aparādha*:

"Because he has not developed any faith in Kṛṣṇa or the name, the materialist cannot even hear the name. To take up the name, one must have qualification. That qualification is faith and faith alone. Good caste by birth, good family, knowledge, social influence or strength, and educational qualifications are not the cause for qualification to the holy name. The only qualification is faith, and faith means to have unflinching conviction in the

glories and powers of the name. That is the statement of the scriptures.

"If one does not have faith, a real Vaiṣṇava will not give him instruction on the name. That is the behavior of a Vaiṣṇava, for if the faithless man takes the name, he will simply offend it. For instance, if one casts pearls to the swine, they will simply grīnd them to dust, or if one gives fine cloth to a monkey, he will tear it to pieces. If the faithless take the name they will kill themselves from their offenses and, simultaneously, he who gives the name to the faithless will lose all his devotional credits very quickly.

"Sometimes a faithless man, being envious, will beg the name from the Vaiṣṇavas, but the Vaiṣṇava should understand that he is a cheater and refuse to give him the name. To take faith in the name one must give up the cheating mentality and the desire for position and fame. The cheater is thinking: 'By taking the name I no longer have to fear committing sinful activities; by becoming a Vaiṣṇava everyone will pay *dandavats* to me and I can get all sorts of service from others; whatever position I lost by my previous activities, I can retrieve by chanting *japa*; by this process I can become very happy in this world.' This is the cheater's mentality. For qualification to the name one must give up this attitude.

"When one has come to have faith in the name, without effort he will receive the name, and by the name's influence he will cross the ocean of material existence. But as long as one does not have faith, one has no qualification or capability. One should give up desire for position in the material world and become humble, listening to the glories of the name from scripture and Vaiṣṇavas.

"If the *guru* gives the name to a faithless man because of desire for wealth or material possessions, by that offense to the name the *guru* will go to hell. If by misfortune or accident a *guru* gives the name and instructions to a faithless person, he should have great fear. He should confess in front of a Vaiṣṇava assembly and give up that disciple. If the *guru* does not do this, by that offense he himself will become devoid of *bhakti* and will wander in illusion. Lord Caitanya gave the order to give instruction in the name everywhere, but that means to give it to the faithful men, and by that, perfection will be reached. One can produce faith by loud *saṅkīrtana*, and when the *jīva* attains faith, he will seek out a bona fide *guru*. From the *guru*, the faithful man will take the holy name and then easily achieve *prema*. When thieves, prostitutes and rogues are made to give up their sinful mentality, one can give them instructions on the

holy name. In this way, the name can be spread everywhere.

"If one does not take these precautions, being guilty of *aparādha*, one will go to hell. If the disciple commits offense, the guru has to suffer in his devotional progress. In this circumstance both the guru and the disciple go to hell."

"O Lord Caitanya, being so merciful, You first gave faith to Jagāi and Mādhāi, then You gave them the name. So wonderful was Your personality that You created faith in all men. The Vaiṣṇava should try to follow in Your footsteps."

Whoever takes pleasure in devotion to the feet of devotees will be decorated with this touchstone jewel of the holy name.

## Chapter 11 - Considering the Name as Equal to Material Piety

*jaya jaya gaura-candra nāma-avatāra*
*jaya jaya hari-nāma sarva-tattva-sāra*

Haridāsa said, "O Lord, please note that the holy name is not to be equated with the pious activities mentioned in the Vedas. One should know the identity of the name. Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual sun, perfect, conscious and inconceivably wonderful. Thus all the Lord's diverse forms can be similarly fully spiritual, including His name, *dhāma* and *līlā*. Unlike material objects and names, the Lord's principal names are nondifferent from the Lord. When the devotee chants the name, that name is coming directly from the spiritual level, from Goloka to the *ātmā*, from the *ātmā* to the body, where it dances on the devotee's tongue, in his mind, etc. If one takes the name with this conception, then it is the real name of the Lord with full power. But to take the name as a material object leads to sorrow.

"Of course, in scripture there are various methods mentioned, according to one's qualification, for coming to the Lord. Men who can think only in material terms of limited time and tangible objects, out of fear, take to religious activity. Actually the Supreme Lord is the only relief from fear, for by taking His lotus feet one can cross over the material ocean. To come to accept the Lord's feet,

the Lord has created different methods. For one who is in the material conception, the method is material. All activities, such as fire sacrifices, baths, charity, *yoga*, *varṇāśrama* duties, vows of visiting holy places, worship of forefathers, meditation, culture of knowledge, worship of demigods, austerities, and *prāyaścitta* make use of purely material elements for limited material goals. But these material pious activities are also a means by which one may eventually come to *bhakti*. Then, upon receiving *bhakti*, one will reject the material, temporary means and engage solely in *bhakti*. This will bring about full bliss or *prema*, the goal of life.

"Here we can see the difference between *bhakti* and pious activities. Material objects and time are without real bliss. All the activity and reward from pious activity is material, and progress toward the goal of spiritual *prema* is slow. There is a great separation between the means and the end.

"Therefore, being merciful, the Lord has given the holy name, by which the intelligent *jīvas* can attain perfection. Because the holy name is also a means or method, it is considered by some to be a part of the pious activity method, with no other potency. In the same way, materialists think that Viṣṇu, like Brahmā and Śiva, can be counted as a material demigod. Though the name is transcendental, without material tinge, the *jīva* covered by materialism gives the name material position, as a material pious activity. This is offensive to the name and an obstacle to *bhakti*.

"In truth, the name is the end, the goal, full of spiritual bliss, the perfection; and simultaneously, the name has appeared in the material world as the means for the *jīva* to come to that end. Thus the name is both the means of purification and the end, *prema*. According to one's qualification, the name may be acting as means or end.

“In the world we can find two means, the secondary or indirect means of purification, such as pious activities, and the principal means, which is the holy name. One should not confuse the two and equate them. By singing the name, transcendental bliss will come and make the heart dance. That actually is the essential character of the name, it is full of nectarean pastimes. That happiness achieved by *jñāna* and *yoga* may seem great in comparison to the shadow of happiness received from the material world, but in comparison to the bliss of the holy name, that happiness is scant.

"At the stage of *sādhana*, the purificatory stage, the name is the means; but in the pure stage, the name is the end and the highest bliss. Thus it cannot be

compared to material pious activities. Even at the *sādhana* stage the name remains pure; the *anarthas* of the *sādhaka* only make it look impure. But by association with Vaiṣṇavas, material mentality and *anarthas* will go away and the pure name will show through. With pious activities, one must reject them in the end, but one never rejects the name. In one stage it is covered, in the other it is pure.

"By the mercy of the guru this knowledge is revealed. If this knowledge is lacking at the stage of *sādhana*, then one becomes an offender. But if one has faith that the name is supreme and without equal, then quickly the pure name will be revealed along with full bliss and nectar.

"If one should commit this offense and desires relief, one should seek good association and purify one's intelligence. If an outcaste is surrendered to the pure name, for one's own purification one should smear his foot dust on one's body, should eat his food remnants and drink his foot water. In that way one can similarly obtain the pure name. An example of this is Kālī dāsa."

Haridāsa said, "I am materially minded and I just sing, but never do I get the touchstone of the name. Be merciful, O Lord, and dance on my tongue in the form of the name. Keep me in the material realm or in the spiritual sky, but wherever You put me, give me the nectar of the name. You have appeared in the world to give the holy name to the people of the world. Please accept me as one of those people. True, I am low, but You are the deliverer of the low. This is our unbreakable relationship. On the strength of this, I am begging for the nectar of the name.

"In Kali-yuga it is not even possible to execute the path of pious activities. Therefore the name has appeared here as the sole process for the age."

Whosoever serves in devotion as the servant of Haridāsa and thinks himself to be without qualifications, is qualified to sing the touchstone of the holy name.

## Chapter 12 - Inattention While Chanting

*jaya jaya mahāprabhu jaya bhakta-gaṇa*

*yāṅhāra prasāde kari nāma-saṅkīrtana*

Haridāsa spoke, "To Sanātana Gosvāmī in Purī and to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa when You travelled to South India, You taught the importance of performing one's chanting without inattention. Inattention is counted as one of the *aparādhas*. Even if one successfully overcomes all the other offenses in chanting, and one is chanting continuously, love of God may not come. One should know that the reason for this is that one is committing the offense known as *pramada*, or inattention. This offense will block progress to *prema*.

"*Pramada* may mean madness, but here the meaning is inattention or carelessness. It is from this offense that all other offenses spring. The wise men recognize three types of inattention: indifference or no attention, laziness, and distraction (attraction to other objects).

"By good fortune, after getting faith, a *jīva* will take up the name. By chanting regularly, counting on a Tulasī *mālā* carefully, he will develop attraction for the name. However, until that attraction has actually developed, one must be very careful about how one chants. Naturally, the common man, having attachment to material things, will be attracted to these things even while chanting. Though chanting *japa* daily, if his taste is elsewhere, he will show indifference to the name. His heart will not be absorbed in chanting the name but in some material object. How can that benefit him? He may chant 64 rounds counting strictly on his *japa* beads, but in his heart he has not received one drop of the taste of the name. This indifference or apathy towards the name is one type of inattention. In the heart of a materialist it is unavoidable.

"If indifference or lack of attraction for the name is present, one should take association of Vaiṣṇavas who are properly chanting in some place sheltered from the material influence. By chanting in that situation, his absorption in material things will be reduced; being inspired by the conduct of the Vaiṣṇavas, he will give up that fault. Gradually the heart will get attraction for the name and will be anxious for the nectar of the name. The advanced devotees have recommended that one live in a place where Kṛṣṇa had His pastimes, near Tulasī, in the company of Vaiṣṇavas and gradually increase the period of chanting. Quickly the taste for material objects will go. Another remedy is to carefully chant in a room by oneself with the door locked, or concentrate on the name by covering the eyes, ears and nose with a cloth or the like to prevent stimuli from the exterior. Carefully chanting in this way, an attraction or taste for the name will develop and indifference will be suppressed.

"If one chants with a sluggish mind, or after chanting a little, one has to stop before finishing his round, it is called laziness. From this, one's taste for the name cannot develop. The remedy for this is to take association of Vaiṣṇavas who do not waste time in material activity, but constantly chant and remember the holy name, being absorbed only in the name. One should follow in their footsteps. When one sees how the true Vaiṣṇava or *sādhu* does not waste time in useless pursuits, he will develop a taste to do likewise. In his mind he will think, "very good." By this, enthusiasm will come to the lazy mind and he will overcome the offense of laziness or inertia. One will become determined to increase his chanting everyday. By this eagerness in his rounds and by the mercy of the devotees, the offense of inertia will quickly go away.

"One should be careful to eliminate the third type of inattention—distraction. From distraction all types of inattention are born. This fault resides in attraction for women (or men, in the case of women) and wealth, attraction for material success or victory, desire for position, and the cheating propensity. If one has attraction in any of these categories, one will naturally be inattentive to the holy name. One should be careful to eliminate these fixations by following the proper Vaiṣṇava behavior. On ekādaśīs and appearance days one should stop thinking of eating and all day and night chant in the association of devotees. In this way one will joyfully engage in devotional activities, listening to scriptures of the Lord in association with the Lord's servants, in the Lord's *dhāma*. Gradually the *bhakti* portion of one's mind will increase and the mind will rejoice in hearing topics about Kṛṣṇa. The higher taste will come and the lower taste will go. Upon hearing songs about Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of the pure devotees, one's mind and ears will taste the real nectar. In this way the desire for low material objects will disappear and the heart will be constantly fixed and attracted to singing the name. By avoiding the offense of distraction, one will be able to indulge in the nectar of name.

"One should thus never be inattentive to complete one's prescribed number of daily rounds. This should be noted day by day. When chanting these prescribed rounds, one should avoid the different types of inattentiveness. Giving up the desire to increase the number of rounds for show, one should attempt to first concentrate nicely on what one can manage. Therefore, the devotee starts by chanting with full concentration in a peaceful place for a short time. He will always be praying to the Lord that he will chant clear, attentive rounds with the mind fixed on Kṛṣṇa; for on one's own one cannot accomplish anything. Kṛṣṇa's grace is necessary to cross the ocean of material existence.

Being anxious in heart, one should beg for mercy, and because Kṛṣṇa is merciful, He will help. Whoever does not try for that mercy is very unfortunate."

That person who has attained the ornament of the touchstone of the holy name still aspires for the two feet of Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

## Chapter 13 - Attachment to "I and Mine"

*gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jāhnavā-jīvana*
*sītādvaita jaya jaya gaura-bhakta-gaṇa*

Overcome with *prema*, Haridāsa recited the last offense in chanting the holy name: "Listen, my Lord, this offense is the lowest of all. With this offense one cannot get *prema*. It is the attitude which is exactly opposite to surrender to the Lord. Having extirpated the first nine offenses, the devotee should culture full surrender to the name. According to the scriptures, there are six types of surrender which are impossible to explain in detail. In brief they are as follows:

1. Accepting everything favorable for service to the Lord.
2. Rejecting everything unfavorable for service to the Lord.
3. Having faith in Kṛṣṇa as one's protector.
4. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa is one's preserver and maintainer.
5. Thinking oneself as low and worthless.
6. Being self- surrendered.

"If one does not culture these attitudes while chanting, one will simply accumulate material in life. Those things which always help increase devotion should be accepted in one's life with relish; those things which impede devotion should be rejected in disgust. One should believe that other than Kṛṣṇa, there is no one on whom to depend and that Kṛṣṇa alone is one's maintainer. One should think that one is very low and unqualified, with no possessions. As an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, one will be willing to do anything that Kṛṣṇa desires. To believe that one is the doer, the giver, the protector, that one owns this body, house, wife and offspring, to think oneself to be a *brāhmaṇa* or *śūdra*,

husband or wife, king or citizen—this should all be rejected. Instead, centering one's thoughts on Kṛṣṇa, one should think of Kṛṣṇa as the controller and doer and that Kṛṣṇa's desire is the main thing. One will do as Kṛṣṇa desires, not as one independently wants to do. 'By Kṛṣṇa's wish I will stay in this world, and by Kṛṣṇa's wish I will cross over it. If there is pain, if there is rejoicing, still I am Kṛṣṇa's servant. By His will He will give mercy to the *jīvas*. My material enjoyment and renunciation are all dependent on Kṛṣṇa.' When this attitude is present it is called *ātmā-nivedana*, or self-surrender.

"When these six types of *śaraṇāgati* (full surrender) are not present in an individual, he possesses the intelligence of "I and mine". Such a person is considered a low rascal because he believes that he is the doer, that the world is his, that he is the creator of his destiny and the enjoyer of the fruits of his activities, that he is his own protector and maintainer, that these are his wife, brothers, sons and daughters, and that by his own endeavor he can achieve all perfection and glory. Such people are proud of the power of their own knowledge. Not considering the Lord's control, they think that by their own brain they can increase and extend the arts and sciences.

"If these people hear the glories of the name, they do not believe them, or if they do chant Kṛṣṇa's name, it is only out of social custom. Being pretenders and cheaters, they may chant the name in *hela-nāmābhāsa*, but will never get *prema*. This offense is due to being bound tightly by *māyā*, and deliverance is very difficult,

"However, one can see that there are some people who, taking up the name and reaching the level of *śuddha-bhakti*, have completely given up material attachment and humbly worship Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and sing His name. One should seek out this type of person, take his association, and serve him with the desire to give up material attachment. Gradually one will become fixed in the name and "I and mine" will go away as one transcends attachment to *māyā*. Giving up the false mentality, one will culture full surrender, which is the constitutional position of the *jīva* and the very nature of *bhakti*. By this one can get *prema*.

"One who gives up the ten offenses and performs devotional service correctly is the most fortunate in the three worlds, is full of all good qualities and is qualified for getting Kṛṣṇa's mercy. While chanting the holy name, very soon, by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, that person will come to the level of *bhāva* and *prema*. The Lord has stated himself that whoever takes the name without offenses will

attain *prema*, and whoever takes the name without giving up the offenses will never attain pure *bhakti* in spite of his practices. The practice of *jñāna* gives liberation, and fruitive activities give material enjoyment, but pure Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* and *prema* are available only by correct execution of *sādhana-bhakti*. As liberation and material enjoyment are both unsatisfying, and as *bhakti* is the only solution, the real form of liberation and the glory of the soul, the *jīva* must obtain *bhakti*. By carefully performing *sādhana-bhakti* without any offenses, the creeper of *bhakti* will quickly yield the fruit of prema. To do *sādhana* carefully means to do it without the ten offenses.

"Therefore, whoever is desirous of obtaining *bhakti* will take the name, being attentive to avoid each of the ten offenses, and in his heart fervently begging at the feet of the holy name to give mercy to destroy offenses. One can never be released from offenses against the name by *prāyaścitta* or pious activity, but only by again taking shelter of the name continuously. Chanting day and night, feeling repentant, the offenses will go and the fruit of the name will come. One will get *śuddha-nāma*, then *bhāva-nāma*, then *prema-nāma*.

"Finally, to keep the offenses from entering the heart, pray for the mercy of Lord Caitanya, who is absorbed in the nectar of the name."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who has become the recipient of the *līlās* of devotion, by the grace of Haridāsa, sings eagerly the touchstone of the holy name.

## Chapter 14 - Offenses in Serving the Deity

*jaya gaura-gadādhara jāhnavā-jīvana*
*jaya sītāpati śrīvāsādi-bhakta-gaṇa*

Mahāprabhu said: "Listen, Haridāsa, you have revealed the truth about offenses to the name. By this the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga will become fortunate. You are the *ācārya* of the holy name. When I hear the description of the name from you, I feel great joy. You are the *ācārya* in conduct and learned as a preacher, and your character is decorated by the jewel of the name. Rāmananda Rāya taught Me about *rasa* and now you have taught Me the glories of the name. Now discuss the different offenses in serving the Deity (*sevāparādha*). Hearing

this, the darkness in the heart of the *jīvas* will be dissipated."

Haridāsa said: "Those who are serving the Deity know about this. I have simply taken shelter of the name, so how can I know? However, not to violate Your order, I will elaborate. Concerning service to the *mūrtī* of the Lord, there are many offenses listed in the scriptures. In one place thirty-two offenses are mentioned, and elsewhere, fifty. The learned have divided these offenses into four types: offenses in directly serving the Deity, offenses in establishing a Deity, offenses in taking darsana of the Deity, and general offenses committed against the Deity.

"The thirty-two offenses listed in the *Bhāgavatam* are as follows:

1. Entering the temple with shoes on.

2. Entering on a palanquin.

3. Not observing festivals.

4. Not paying obeisances.

5. Reciting prayers in an unclean state.

6. Bowing on one hand.

7. Circumambulating in front of the Deity.

8. Spreading one's legs before the Deity.

9. Sleeping before the Deity.

10. Eating before the Deity.

11. Speaking lies before the Deity.

12. Talking loudly in the temple room.

13. Gossiping.

14. Cursing or using harsh words.

15. Thanking others in front of the Deity.

16. Fighting in the temple.

17. Crying in front of the Deity.

18. Criticizing others.

19. Covering oneself in a blanket before the Deity.
20. Praising others before the Deity.
21. Using obscene language.
22. Belching or passing gas.
23. Not offering the best articles possible.
24. Eating food not offered to the Deity.
25. Not offering fruits in season.
26. Offering already enjoyed food.
27. Sitting with one's back to the Deity.
28. Sitting directly in front of the Deity.
29. Paying respects to others before the Deity.
30. Not glorifying the *guru*.
31. Praising oneself.
32. Criticizing Deities or demigods.

"Other offenses are:

1. Eating the food of a materialist.
2. Touching the Deity in a dark room.
3. Approaching the Deity without proper etiquette, as being unclean.
4. Opening the Deity doors without musical instruments sounding.
5. Offering food seen by a dog.
6. Speaking unnecessarily during *pūjā*.
7. Going outside the Deity room during the course of doing *pūjā*.
8. Offering incense without a fragrant flower.
9. Offering unsuitable flower during *pūjā*.

10. Commencing *pūjā* with unwashed mouth.
11. Having sex before *pūjā*.
12. Touching a woman during her period.
13. Touching a lamp.
14. Touching a dead body.
15. Wearing unsuitable cloth.
16. Seeing a dead body.
17. Passing air.
18. Becoming angry.
19. Coming directly from a cremation.
20. Doing *pūjā* with yet undigested food in the stomach.
21. Eating onions, *kusumbhasaka*.
22. Chewing betel nuts.
23. Touching the Deity after massage with oil and not bathing.
24. Offering flowers from an unclean pot.
25. Doing *pūjā* at an inauspicious time.
26. Sitting directly on the floor.
27. Touching the Deity with the left hand while bathing Him.
28. Offering old fruit.
29. Boasting during *pūjā*.
30. Spitting.
31. Wearing horizontal *tilaka*.
32. Not washing the feet.
33. Offering food cooked by non-Vaiṣṇavas.
34. Allowing non-Vaiṣṇavas to be present during *pūjā*.

35. Not worshiping Viṣṇu.

36. Talking to a Śiva or Dūrgā worshiper.

37. Bathing the Deity with water touched by the fingernails.

38. Worshiping while perspiring.

39. Making oaths before Kṛṣṇa.

40. Stepping over articles of the Deity.

"All these offenses in serving the Deity will obstruct one's *bhakti*. Anyone worshiping the Deity should avoid these offenses. The devotees avoid both *sevā* and *nāma—aparādhas*, and thus taste the nectar of devotional service. When a devotee commits a *sevā-aparādha*, he should rectify it immediately. With the *nāma-aparādhas* he must constantly be rectifying, improving and avoiding. One who is on the level of *bhāva* worships the Deity day and night in solitude. He makes no offenses against the name or in service because his service is performed in his mind."

On the order of Haridāsa, the devotees chant the touchstone of the holy name.

## Chapter 15 - Bhajana-praṇālī

*gadāi gaurāṅga jaya jaya nityānanda*
*jaya sītānātha jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

The Lord said, "Haridāsa, by your devotion you have received all knowledge available in the universe. All the Vedas are dancing on your tongue; all the conclusions of scripture are in your speech. Now speak clearly about the *rasa* (sentiment or mellow) of the holy name. How does the *jīva* get qualification for the *rasa* of the name?"

Haridāsa, in great bliss, said, "Through Your inspiration, I will describe it.

"The highest, purest state, the perfection of the Absolute Truth, is called *rasa*. This *rasa* is not the emotions or sentiment of the material world but is the inherent nature of the Absolute Pure; it is unlimited, full of bliss and the

greatest glory. The Absolute Truth reveals His variegated character through His energies, which are inseparable from His very existence *(abhinna)*. His energies create the variegated spiritual world which is prerequisite to *rasa*.

"Through His spiritual energy, Kṛṣṇa reveals His form, name, *dhāma* and activities. The Supreme Truth is known as Kṛṣṇa with a *Śyāmasundara* form, residing in Goloka-dhāma, performing His sweet pastimes with His devotees. Thus variety and *rasa* exist in the Lord due to His spiritual energies, which cannot be separated or differentiated from the substance of the Lord *(abhinna)*. In this way, the Absolute Truth remains supreme, whole *(akhaṇḍa)*, beyond duality *(advaita)*, and simultaneously engages in a transcendental world full of beautiful forms, activities and emotions.

"The shadow energy of the Lord's spiritual energy is called *māyā*. By the will of Kṛṣṇa, this energy creates the material world outside of the spiritual dimension. Through His *jīva-śakti*, He creates the innumerable souls situated between the material and spiritual worlds, similar in quality to Kṛṣṇa but infinitesimal in size. Because of their borderline quality, the *jīvas* are of two types, eternally bound *jīvas* and eternally liberated *jīvas*. Those who are eternally liberated are qualified as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants in the spiritual sky, and those who are eternally bound engage and suffer in the material shadow away from Kṛṣṇa. The *jīvas* dwelling in the material world are of two types, those taking Kṛṣṇa's name and associating with devotees, who will go to the spiritual world of *rasa* by the power of the name, and those who ignore Kṛṣṇa and toil hopelessly for *rasa* in relation to inert matter.

"The gradual realization of *rasa* in the name is compared to the blossoming of a flower. The name is compared to a flower in bud when it is spread to the general mass of people in the world. When one realizes the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana through continual chanting of the name, that is compared to the partially opened flower. Continuing *sādhana* further, when Kṛṣṇa's sixty-four qualities become revealed in the name, that is compared to the fragrance from the half-opened flower. When one realizes the eternal pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the flower is in full bloom. Then, by the great mercy of the name, the original energies of *hlādinī* (bliss) and *samvit* (consciousness) belonging to the spiritual world, whose prime embodiment is Rādhārāṇī, unite in the form of *bhakti-devī* and descend upon the small *jīva*, who possesses only a small portion of *hlādinī* and *samvit* energy. From the transcendental realm, *bhakti-devī* reveals to the *jīva* the full *rasa* in the name, and by her mercy the *jīva* takes on his spiritual body and enters into the

pastimes and tastes *rasa*.

"There are four ingredients of *rasa*: *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva* and *vyabhicārī (sañcārī) bhāva*. The mixture of these ingredients produces *rasa*. *Vibhāva*, the general cause for *rasa*, is divided into *ālambana* and *uddīpana*. *Ālambana* means the root cause, that upon which the *rasa* depends. It is divided into *āśraya*, the recipient, who is the devotee, and *viṣaya*, the object, who is Kṛṣṇa. *Uddīpana*, the instigation, is composed of the form and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, which are realized through constant chanting. Thus, where there is *ālambana* (devotee and Kṛṣṇa) and *uddīpana* (Kṛṣṇa's qualities), *līlā* and *rasa* can occur.

"When the conditions of *vibhāva* are perfected, *anubhāva* (external symptoms of internal emotions) appears. These symptoms are all based on pure spiritual love, and can in no way be compared to the symptoms of love in the material world. Gradually, as emotions deepen, *sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī bhāvas* (additional symptoms) appear. By the combination of these ingredients, the initial *stāyī-bhāva* (primary mood) of the devotee transforms to *rasa*, full spiritual flavors. The situation of tasting *rasas* in the spiritual world is the highest perfection, the ultimate goal of the *jīva*, according to the scriptures. There are four goals for man mentioned in the Vedas: *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*. These, however, are meant to lead to the supreme goal *(parama-puruṣārtha)—rasa*. One who is truly liberated is qualified for *rasa*.

"The path for attaining *rasa* is as follows: The *jīva* who has attained faith in *bhakti* receives a pure Vaiṣṇava guru. That guru gives the *mahā-mantra*. The *jīva* will take the *mantra*, either in the form of *smaraṇa* (remembering the name) or *kīrtana* (chanting the name), regulating himself by counting on Tulasī beads. Gradually, as his craving for the name increases, he will increase to 3 x 64 rounds. Of the two forms of taking the name, *kīrtana* is the more powerful, for in that process are combined *śravana*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa*, and by it the senses of the *jīva* dance in joy. By taking shelter of any of the nine processes of *bhakti*, one progresses in devotion, but of the nine processes, chanting is the best. Those who have an attraction for Deity worship will reach perfection only by also engaging in hearing and chanting the name. But those who have exclusive attraction for the name need only engage in hearing, chanting and remembering the name. If one executes these three processes nicely, all the other nine processes of *bhakti*—serving the lotus feet, praying, servitude, and complete self-surrender—can also be easily accomplished.

"With faith that the name and Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent, and avoiding the ten offenses, the effects of the name will be perceived. By clear chanting and remembering of the name, one will find attraction and joy in the name. Then, one will either meditate on a form of Kṛṣṇa or constantly take *darsana* of His *mūrtī* along with one's chanting, delving deeper and deeper into the name. When one has succeeded in realizing the form of Kṛṣṇa in the name, one will then meditate on Kṛṣṇa's qualities while chanting, one will meditate on a pastime of Kṛṣṇa's with the aid of a specific *mantra*. When all four elements become one, one will begin to perceive *rasa* in the name. One will perfect the *rasa* by meditating on the eightfold pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Gaining one's spiritual body by the mercy of the *guru*, one will enter into the pastimes with the associates of Rādhārāṇī, and according to the directions of the *sakhīs*, one will serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in ecstasy. This service in the conjugal mood is the most brilliant thing in the spiritual world, and is obtainable by the *jīva* by the practice of *bhakti*. There are even higher stages than this, but it is not possible to describe them by mere words. These things will be revealed by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

"The specific process is now described. To receive a spiritual body in conjugal *rasa* one must culture eleven specific items in one's identity: one's relationship, age, name, bodily color, membership in a particular group, dress, order, residence, highest expectation in service and the protecting *gopī* under whom one serves. These items are perfected through five stages. First, one will approach a *guru* who has realized Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes and the eleven items in eternal service. Upon hearing the eightfold pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one inquires how to realize that state. The *guru* then describes the eleven items by which one can enter the pastimes. This is called *sravana-dāsa*.

"The *guru* will then choose the particular spiritual identity of the disciple according to the tendency and attraction of the disciple. If the disciple does not have a natural taste in one *bhāva*, he can request another from the *guru*. When finally one's spiritual identity fits, he vows to the guru never to give it up. This is called *varaṇa-daśā* (the accepting stage). The disciple will then practice remembering his given identity in his heart. This *smaraṇa-daśā* (stage of remembering) is divided into five levels. First one tries to remember the eightfold pastimes, but the mind wanders. This is *smaraṇa*. When one's practice becomes steady, it is called *dhāraṇā*. When one can meditate on all aspects of the desired object, it is called *dhyāna*. When this *dhyāna* becomes continual, it is called *anusmṛti*. When this becomes perfect, it is called *samādhī*.

"If these stages are followed progressively in *smaraṇa*, one will quickly come to the stage of *āpana* (possession), where the eleven items are realized as one's constitutional state. However, if one is busy making an exterior show, but does not cultivate fixing one's identity within, he cannot perfect this stage. But fixing one's identity is natural, since the *jīva* has simply forgotten his perfect stage when entering the material realm and body, desiring his own pleasure, and proportionately as one increases his practice of remembering his natural state, material designation and identification will decrease.

"One can reach *āpana-daśā* either from *rāgānuga sādhana*, where scriptural rules are minimal, or through *vaidhi-sādhana*, where relying on suitable rules from scripture is predominant. If one progresses through the stages of faith, practice, purification, steadiness, taste and attachment, in either *vaidhi* or *rāgānuga-sādhana*, one then comes to the stage of *bhāva*, preliminary *prema*. It is at this point that one attains *āpana-daśā*. At this stage, beyond the category of *sādhana-bhakti*, when scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, conceptions of *rāgānuga* and *vaidhi* will both be discarded.

"Here, one's identification with the material body will vanish and identification with one's spiritual body will predominate. In that spiritual body *(svarūpa-siddhi)* one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This final stage is called *sampatti-daśā*. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, suddenly one's material body, mind, intelligence and false ego will be cast off and one will appear in a pure spiritual body, serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa along with Their eternal associates. The *jīva* can achieve this fifth stage in perfecting *rasa* by taking the name and becoming purified.

"Therefore, the *jīva* with faith should take up chanting of the name seriously and constantly in good association. He will take superior Vaiṣṇava association, avoid material association and reside away from material glare. By the strength of these three items, he will achieve his position of real glory."

Haridāsa said, "I am low, mean-minded and absorbed in material enjoyment, always refusing good association. Still, I am begging for causeless mercy to progress to the *rasa* stage of *bhakti*."

Saying this, Haridāsa fell unconscious at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya said, "Listen, Haridāsa, in the future people with evil minds will degrade these intimate pastimes, but those who are real devotees will understand the supreme teaching that you have given. Taking shelter of this

knowledge and taking shelter of the name, they will chant the name and worship Kṛṣṇa, far away from the materialists. The *jīva* will attain faith in *bhakti* through past accumulated *sukṛti*, (devotional activity). It is hard for all *jīvas* to obtain *bhakti*. Lead them on a direct path home. I have come to preach the *yuga-dharma* of the holy name. You are helping Me accomplish this activity by describing the full truth about the holy name."

Whoever attains the full nectar of the touchstone of the holy name, worshiping Kṛṣṇa in spontaneous emotion, has attained full success and full bliss. A worthless rascal, weeping, I hold that person's feet and beg that he distribute the bliss and let me drink forever just one paticle of the nectarean *rasa*.

## Nāma-bhajana

*Prema* alone is the purpose of the life of *jīvas*. *Bhāva*, which is the soul's feeling, develops into *prema*. Turning their face towards Kṛṣṇa, the more *jīvas* progress, the more they approach the temple of *prema*. Thus, in considering the candidacy for *prema*, we meet at the outset with two kinds of circumstances: one is an intense longing for the unattained *prema*, the other is the stage when the pedestal of *prema* is already reached. There is no higher stage beyond the latter one—an incessant *rasa* in an undivided unique *tattva* of that region. Those devotees with an utter craving for *prema* but who are still on the way to it are again divided into two classes according to their love of seclusion or bustee: the first are called *viviktānandīs*, who are close followers of approved usages, the others are known as *gostyānandīs* and are ever happy in preaching. Deep meditation on Godhead is the discipline of *premī bhaktas* and glorifying or singing the name of Kṛṣṇa is their preaching.

In the state when there is an intense longing for the unattained *prema*, the *premī bhaktas* are exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa—utter self-surrender marks them out. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Gītā* have very highly eulogized such refugees. If a devotee does not take absolute shelter under the cool shade of the gracious feet of Kṛṣṇa, why speak of *prema*? He remains quite in the dark even about *bhāva*. A self-surrendering devotee should only accept things that are favorable to *prema-bhakti*, and should deny everything—whatever it may

be—that is antagonistic or unfavorable to it. Such a devotee believes that Kṛṣṇa is the only protector, that nothing else or no one else but Kṛṣṇa can save or protect him. He has not the least doubt that Kṛṣṇa alone protects all. Devotees firmly and sincerely believe themselves to be very humble and insignificant. The faith of an earnest and exclusive devotee is that he himself can do nothing, that not even a straw moves without the will of Kṛṣṇa.

Extremely self-surrendered devotees prefer to most exclusively embrace *Śrī Nāma* to every other feature of devotion. They have a more intense appetite for singing and meditating upon the holy name than for anything else. Of all the means of *bhajana*, the name of Bhagavān is most purely spiritual. In describing the absolute duties, the *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* has spoken of the glories of chanting and contemplating the holy name as the best—it has been given the foremost place. The *śāstras* declare that there is not the least difference between Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's name because the real nature of His name is spiritual—the holy name manifests Himself as the *caitanya-rasa-vigraha* of Kṛṣṇa.

Those who desire to realize the form of Kṛṣṇa and the form of the holy name must try to realize their own *cit-svarūpa*. The practicer of *bhakti* can never be dexterous in his adoration of God so long as he does not realize spiritual truth. So, how can he attain his object of pursuit? The attainment of an absolute conception of spiritual truths causes the amelioration of *bhajana*. Here we shall say something on this subject.

Many a time we have pointed out (in the *Caitanya-śikśāmṛta*) with quotations from the *śāstras* that every *jīva* is a spiritual molecule, that the residence of Kṛṣṇa is a spiritual kingdom, that Kṛṣṇa is the spiritual sun, that devotion to Kṛṣṇa is a spiritual inclination, and that Kṛṣṇa's name is *cid-rasa-vigraha*. Now, we venture to show the relation between spirit and those devotees who are extremely anxious for *prema*, and then we shall show the means to the attainment of the highest bliss of the soul. If we have spiritual merit earned in previous births, transcendental felicity will be enkindled in our heart. We have no appetite *(ruci)* for the knowledge of Brahman, which is restricted to realization of mere *cit* only; for, spiritual sportive pastimes have no place in it.

The Savior of the Iron Age, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, declares the Vedas to be the only judge and reveals their nine *prameyas* (subject matters). There is a broad discussion on it in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The Vedas have proved *jīvas* to be spiritual atomic parts of the Deity. *Jīvas* are like rays from the sun, Kṛṣṇa; so the spiritual form of the *jīvas* must be identified with the spiritual form of Godhead. But the difference lies in the fact that Kṛṣṇa may be compared with the full sun,

while the *jīvas* are His innumerable rays. Kṛṣṇa is Lord of lords—the *jīvas* are His eternal servants. There is no denying the fact that the residential home of Kṛṣṇa is in the *Paravyoma*, or Goloka, which is all-spiritual. Vaikuṇṭha, *cij-jagat*, etc. all refer to that spiritual region. The *Vājasaneya Upaniṣad* speaks of the form of Kṛṣṇa to be purely spiritual; the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* describes the eternal powers of Kṛṣṇa, who is superior to the best and higher than the highest. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* shows *bhakti* to the *cid-rasa*, and, coming to conceive Kṛṣṇa to be the life of lives, the wise, after discarding all garrulity, dry wisdom and vain arguments, dive deep to see the bottom of their soul. They, after realizing the Deity by dint of pure intuition, run after devotion. He who does this is a *brāhmaṇa*, i.e., a Vaiṣṇava devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Such has been shown to be the nature of *bhakti*, or devotion. As the *Cāndogya Upaniṣad* states: "O Maitreya! The soul alone is to be seen, heard, reflected, meditated upon and realized by spiritual organs. All is then known to us beyond any doubt. That soul (Kṛṣṇa) is dearer than one's son, dearer than wealth, for He is omniscient.

Things that are sense-pleasing are never worth endearment; from the pleasure of the Great Soul all joy proceeds." Thus the eternal relation of happiness between Kṛṣṇa and the *jīva* is *prema*.

What exact connection does there exist between this manifested and visible mundane world and the spiritual sphere? In going to search after spiritual truths, more often than not we are deluded. After deep contemplation and discrimination, we conclude spirit to be something opposite to matter. Pressing our worldly reasoning too far, we leave *cid-rasa* to the background and are satisfied with an imaginative inarticulate and incomplete conception of spiritual Brahman. This is only an imagination of the *cit-svarūpa* of Brahman. In such a stage, Brahman is immutable, incorporeal, invisible or formless, without attributes and dry of *prema*—this uncommon perception is like the "sky-flower!" And being unable to know the name, form, attributes and pastimes or diversions of that *cit-svarūpa*, we turn to being inactive. Hence it is that all portents of *jīvas* come to pass due to this dry wisdom. This is well illustrated in the conversation between Vyāsa and Nārada.

It is clear from the above that you never can know the spiritual sportive pastimes of *para-brahma* if you are dazzled by the mere *cit-svarūpa* of Brahman, which is only a semblance of the eternal light of *cit*. Brother, look ahead! Enter into the kingdom of Godhead after dashing through the brilliance of pure and simple *cit*. There you will be able to realize the spiritual pastimes of Godhead, then you will be able to taste the ambrosia of an incessant *brahma-rasa*. No

longer will your soul remain wooden-like. The name, form, attributes and *līlā* of the Supreme Being are manifested not by any earthly light, but by a spiritual flame. The sun, moon, stars, lightning and fire of this earth are quite unfit to give light to that other spiritual horizon. This spiritual light, which is far beyond worldly lights, brightens that region. It is only a perverted reflection of that light that we think supplies us with light; but in fact, it does not. While describing *brahmapūra* (the region of Brahman), the *Cāndogya Upaniṣad* gives us a comprehensive knowledge of it. The spiritual kingdom as displayed by the spiritual light is an ideal to this base earth. There is not the least tinge of baseness; while, on the contrary, only an all-pervading daintiness is its sweet affair. The fourteen mundane worlds are only a perverted reflection of that sphere; the gross sun is a reflection of that light and its subtle reflection is seen in the mundane rays of dry wisdom arising from mind, conscience and consciousness. Our gross senses believe the gross sun to be a flash of luster, and we are proud of the earthly knowledge which is gained by dint of the eight processes of *yoga* that are actions of the subtle intellect, conscience and ego. All these are seemingly natural workings of engrossed *jīvas*.

Listening to the advice of Nārada, while Dvaipāyana Ṛṣi (Vyāsa) was completely absorbed in the single and natural deep meditation of the soul, he fully and clearly saw the name, form, attributes and pastimes of the Supreme Person. He also saw *māyā*, the shadow of *para-śakti*, as having no other shelter than the Absolute Truth, and understood the *anarthas* of *jīvas*, the atomic *cit-tattvas*, who are engrossed, fascinated and enslaved by *māyā*. Further realizing that such *jīvas* can come to perceive their own personal forms if absorbed in a profoundly meditative *bhakti-yoga*, he compiled the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which describes the spiritual pastimes of Bhagavān. The forgetfulness of his own eternal form and the form of Kṛṣṇa is the foremost *anartha* of a *jīva*, whence arises his aversion to Kṛṣṇa, as a result of which he is revolved by the wheel of *māyā* on the path of karma. Thus the world is full of weal and woes. When *jīvas* take shelter under *bhakti*, after discarding the basely turned endeavors of the mundane wise reasoning of the eight processes of *yoga*, of the *karma-mārgīs* (followers of *karma* or fruitive acts), and of the arguments of the Sāṅkhya school of the *jñāna-mārgīs* (seekers of dry wisdom) which vainly try to refute things that are not God or His concerns, then only are the pure rays of spiritual intuition enkindled in them by being naturally absorbed in divine contemplation. The worldly pleasures then prick them like piercing thorns, and Kṛṣṇa *prema* is awakened in the heart. By these means only can they be blessed by the grace of Kṛṣṇa—the spiritual sun. This divine grace is the only means for

washing away all stain from the mind and for progressing forward towards the ever-shining land of Kṛṣṇa.

A sincere faith in pure devotion is the root cause of this unlabored restraint of the senses together with the mind, and confinement of the soul in a deep contemplation on Godhead. When the happy moment came, Dvaipāyana Ṛṣi became doubtful about the rules and methods of *karma-kānda* and vain *jñāna-kānda*. In reply to the question of his spiritual preceptor, Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, he said, "O Lord, no doubt I have realized all the truths you advised, still my soul, I know not why, finds no contentment! O son of Brahmā, be kind to tell me the unimaginable and indescribable secret that lurks behind it. I beg this of you, being greatly troubled at heart."

Then Nārada Gosvāmī replied, "O Vyāsa, you have not striven to give as vivid a picture of the pure spiritual pastimes of Bhagavān, as you have in the *Vedānta-sūtras* and *Mahābhārata* of the four main objects of human pursuit, viz., virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation. It is due to this shortcoming of yours that you enjoy no contentment. Therefore you have committed a great and heavy omission by giving too high an eulogy of castes and stages as the religion of the soul. If any one, leaving aside such a conventional religion of the self, engages himself in the service of Hari, but slips before reaching the goal, he suffers no loss to speak of. On the contrary, if he strictly sticks to conventional religion, being utterly unmindful of *Hari bhajana*, what worthy and exalted goal can he attain thereby?" It is clear from the above that there is no second help but *Hari bhajana*. A *jīva* can attain his highest goal if he embraces the holy name as the means to Hari.

Vyāsadeva then followed up this *bhakti-yoga* by absorbing himself in an easy meditation on Godhead. "Easy" is used here to show that devotion to Kṛṣṇa is most innate in the *jīvātmā*. Because it is an inherent and eternal religion of the *jīvas*, it is called the "easy" universal religion of every *jīva*. Its workings develop in the following manner. When *jīvas* come to realize that the path of *karma* does not give them eternal good, whether it be the eighteen inferior *karma-yoga* or the eight subtle processes of *yajña*—neither can ever lead them to the highest goal, service to Kṛṣṇa, which is their soul's religion—or again when they are fully convinced that there is not the least chance to attain perpetual happiness by mundane wisdom or limited knowledge that aims at the spiritual kingdom—both gained by endeavor of the subtle frame of mind, ego, etc.—finding no shore to catch, they thus, by the grace of *sādhus* and the spiritual preceptor, cry out to Kṛṣṇa from the deepest recesses of their heart: "O

Kṛṣṇa! O You Deliverer of the fallen! Although I am Your eternal servant, I am fallen into the deep abyss of the world and am badly dashed from shore to shore by its drowning waves of troubles and tribulations. Take me up, my Lord, to the shade of the cool dust of Your lotus feet. Oh! Have mercy on this wretched self!" Then the all-merciful Lord lovingly takes all *jīvas* up to His feet.

When with sincere thrills of joy and tears trickling down their cheeks they constantly chant, hear and remember the name of Kṛṣṇa, they gradually reach the stage of *bhāva*. Appearing in their heart, Kṛṣṇa erases all stain from their mind. Having thus cleansed their heart graciously, He blesses them with His own *prema*. Extreme humbleness and utter devotion are necessary to call Kṛṣṇa to the heart. Then, when earthly knowledge, reasoning and striving are completely burnt to ashes, the soul's eyes can perceive Bhagavān and His associated counterparts. If after discarding the company of *asat* fellows—those who are attached to the fair sex and those who are nondevotees of Kṛṣṇa—one embraces the company of the good or *sat*, before long he attains firm faith and then through the stages of *niṣṭhā*, etc., reaches the ladder of *bhāva*. Those whose hearts are crooked will beyond any doubt stumble downwards to hell.

The fortunate ones who earnestly long to ascend the terrace of *prema*, do sincerely and incessantly chant the name of Kṛṣṇa in the company of *sādhus*. They do not have any appetite for any other feature of devotion. When in a short time by the grace of the holy name the heart becomes closely attentive, the fruits of religious forbearance, control over sensual appetites, religious observances, withholding the breath by way of religious austerity, abstract religious contemplation, steady abstraction of the mind and indifference to external impressions are very easily gained without paying the least heed to any of these. The holy name alone is a complete suspension of the fleeting mental operations. The more the heart is transparent, the more the diverse pastimes of the spiritual kingdom play in it. The flow of the milk of this happiness is so very fast running that no other means can give even the smallest drop of it. The *jīvas* should desire no other wealth than this grace of Kṛṣṇa.

The holy name is spiritual; wisdom, vows, meditation, abnegation, mental quietness, virtue, contrivance—none of these can ever equal the name. Know it for certain that the holy name is the highest salvation, the holy name is the highest end, the holy name is the noblest and final beatitude, the holy name is existing eternally, the holy name alone is the supermost devotion, the holy name is the highest intellect, the holy name is the topmost *prīti* and the holy name is the brightest remembrance. The holy name is the seed and the holy

name is the fruit to *jīvas*—the holy name is their Lord and the holy name alone is the supermost object of their worship. The holy name is their preceptor.

The Vedas have described the spirituality of the name of Kṛṣṇa to be the highest truth. "O Lord! We have reasonably judged Your name to be higher than the highest and so we chant Your holy name. *Nāma-bhajana* is not bound by any rule—the holy name is beyond all virtuous acts—He is spiritual—He is virility and luster in a person. All the Vedas have been manifested from this holy name. The holy name is bliss, the holy name is *ānanda*. We can excellently be devoted to Him. The holy name is worship and is to be worshiped; Your feet are to be held in veneration. Repeatedly we fall prostrate at Your lotus feet and anoint our bodies with the pollen thereof. In order to lead the soul to its highest stage, devotees mutually discuss the holy name and sing His glories. They believe Your name to be Caitanya in person, and always sing and hear *kīrtana* which is identical with Your name—they are purified by it. The holy name alone is *sat*, or ever-existing. The essence of the Vedas is the holy name, who is the Absolute Truth and whose form is *sac-cid-ānanda* (*sat*—ever-existing, *cit*—knowing, and *ānanda*—all-bliss). O Viṣṇu, it is only by the grace of Your name that we are capable of offering these hymns to You. So we should adore and pray to Your holy name alone."

In His own "Eight Glorious Precepts," Śrīmān Mahāprabhu has spoken of the glories of the holy name. He has also given a glimpse of the gradual steps of *nāma-bhajana* in those eight precepts. His *śloka*. beginning with "Consider yourself humbler than the grass" hints at how to adore the holy name after avoiding the ten offenses. His *śloka* "Followers or money I want not" speaks of the selflessness of *nāma-bhajana* in a devotional spirit—devotion unactuated by any lustful motive. The *śloka* "O Son of Nanda" tells us how to make a plaintive report to the Lord. The last two *ślokas* describe the process of *Vraja bhajana* where one loves Kṛṣṇa to serve Him either in *sambhoga* (union) or in *vipralambha-rasa* (deeper union in separation) or in both after being completely and spontaneously attached to Śrīmatī Rādhā. The *śāstras* have eulogized so highly and so often the glories of the holy name that their number is legion—to describe them is to write a big volume like the Śrī Hari-bhakti vilāsa. So we hardly have any more space in this small volume to discuss them at length. Thus, stopping here with the glories of the holy name, we attempt a very short survey of the processes of *nāma-bhajana*.

Devotees who are desirous of ascending the terrace of *prema* should remember a few points even before entering the field of *nāma-bhajana*. Firstly,

they should know for certain that the form of Kṛṣṇa, the form of Kṛṣṇa's name, the form of service to Kṛṣṇa and the form of Kṛṣṇa's servants are eternally free—eternally spiritual! Kṛṣṇa, His abode and paraphernalia are all spiritual and beyond the grasp of *māyā*, the illusory energy. No mundane consideration exists in *sevā*, or service. The seat, room, garden, forest, Yamunā River and every other thing of Kṛṣṇa are spiritual and hence untouchable by matter. They are further aware of the fact that this belief is not a blind worldly faith—it is absolutely true and eternal. The exact forms of all these do not in truth manifest on this earth. Such ideas may perpetually reign in the pure heart of pure devotees. Here, the fruit of all these spiritual practices is self-realization. Those who have realized the form of Kṛṣṇa, as well as of their own self, do before long attain *vastu-siddhi* (enter the eternal pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual kingdom and gain personal service of Kṛṣṇa). Here in this world, devotees can only get a glimpse of those immaterial things. The first stage to it is freedom from the bondage of *māyā*—the climax is *prema*.

The realization of truths that are beyond the grasp of matter is called *svarūpa-siddhi*. This is true knowledge of the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the *jīvas*, and when this is acquired, the endeavor for *prema* as a means and *prema* as an object of pursuit are gained. The spiritual region of Kṛṣṇa, His spiritual name, His divine attributes and spiritual pastimes—all these being the necessary object of pursuit—come under *prema*. This is delineated in the *Praśnopaniṣad*.

The holy name has been accepted in all respects to be an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa on this earth. Although He seems to be just a word, still, by His unimaginable powers, He is spiritual and is a special incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa and His name are identical, Kṛṣṇa has descended to the earth as the holy name; so, Kṛṣṇa's name is the first introduction to Kṛṣṇa. With determination to reach Kṛṣṇa, *jīvas* must first accept the name of Kṛṣṇa. In attempting to determine the significance and origin of *Hari nāma*, Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī, the dearest disciple of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, writes, "Blessed are they no doubt who utter 'Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare; Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare' even with indifference. (This verse was culled from the *Agni Purāṇa*.) 'Those who chant the holy name are free from every spot of sin.' (Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa) These utterings of Hare Kṛṣṇa, coming out from the lips of Śrī Caitanya, inundated the whole world with the flood of *prema*. Glory be to the holy name by His will!" Hence, Śrīmān Mahāprabhu, as mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and in the

*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Himself sang and taught *jīvas* to count these sixteen names of thirty-two syllables on Tulasī beads. Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī explains these sixteen names in the following way:

"At the utterance of Hari, all sins are washed from the heart of the wicked. As the flame will burn the finger even though unconsciously thrust into fire, similarly, even the very casually pronounced holy name will burn every bit of sin within you. After that holy name of the Lord manifests the Absolute Truth whose form is *cid-ānanda*, it destroys *avidyā*, or illusion, and its works. All this is the work of *Hari nāma*. Or as He takes off the three-fold pangs of miseries, distresses and afflictions, He is therefore called Hari (lit. to steal away). Or Hari is so called because He drives out all the three-fold distresses of every animate and inanimate being, or because the mind of the fourteen worlds is charmed by hearing and singing the spiritual attributes of Hari. Or as He, by His exceeding beauty before the loveliness and beauty of a thousand Cupids, which causes these to hide their faces in shame, He also fascinates all men and incarnations, hence He is called Hari, which in the vocative case is pronounced Hare. Or again, according to the views of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, She who fascinates the mind of Hari by Her *prema-svarūpa*, attachments and love is Harā, or in other words, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu. The vocative case of Harā is Hare.

"The meaning of Kṛṣṇa according to the views of *āgama* is that this Kṛṣṇa who is *ānanda* in form and attracts every object, is *parabrahma*. Kṛṣṇa, when in the vocative case, is also Kṛṣṇa. The *āgama* says, 'O goddess, all guilts and sinful motives vanish from the heart at the very sound of *'rā'*, and the door in the form of *'ma'* is attached to it in order to shut out those evils and prevent them from reentering the heart. These together give us Rāma.' The *Purāṇas* have further said that Kṛṣṇa, who is cleverer than the cleverest, more witty than the greatest wit, who is the presiding Deity of all spiritual pastimes and who is eternally engaged in spiritual dalliance with Śrī Rādhā, is termed as Rāma."

Devotees who thirst for *prema* and are on the way to it, chant and realize this holy name of Hare Kṛṣṇa by counting on beads. While chanting and remembering the name, they incessantly remember His spiritual characteristics by explaining to the mind the meanings of the holy name. In this way, their heart is very soon freed from every spot and becomes pure and stainless; and with the morning twilight of the holy name, as the heart is purified by constant remembrance, the holy name dawns on the horizon of the transparent heart with full shining rays.

Those who have accepted the holy name are either self-realized devotees or are still trotting onwards to self-realization. Of these, the latter class of devotees are divided according to their early and advanced stages. Besides these, devotees who are eternally free no longer confuse the soul for the body and never identify themselves with the body or mind. In the early stage, devotees begin to chant the name in a fixed number, and as they gradually increase their countings, they come to a stage when their tongue does not stop for a moment from singing the holy name. Although devotees in their first stage have no taste for the holy name because their tongues are cholera-stricken by avidyā, still a patient and continuous utterance of the name proves to be the only remedy. Later they will feel uneasy if stopped from singing the name. A constant and regardful chanting produces a supreme liking for Him.

Zeal and earnestness to avoid offenses to the holy name are very needful in the first stage, which can be done only by an avoidance of worldly-minded men and keeping company with devotees. Incessant chanting of the holy name will, when the first flow has passed away, naturally increase a love for the name and kindness to jīvas. In this, karma, jñāna and yoga have nothing to do. If their workings are strong even then, they may help the devotees of the holy name in maintaining their livelihood. If Kṛṣṇa's holy name is sung with a firm inclination, it will before long cleanse the heart and burn away avidyā; when avidyā vanishes, the brighter illumination of a true, unbiased abnegation and a sense of the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and jīvas will appear in the heart. Numberless times has this been proved to be true among the wise.

With a happy heart, one should recollect the meaning and form of the holy name and should pray to Kṛṣṇa with a heart-rending lamentation, and this will draw the grace of Kṛṣṇa which will lead him onward in the path of bhajana; or else, births will pass in vain like karmīs and frustrated jñānīs.

Those who engage in bhajana may be divided into two distinct classes. Some bear only the burden, others appreciate the real worth of things. Those who long for enjoyment or for self-destroying salvation and are attached to worldly affairs are only yoked to the heavy load of virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation—they are unaware of the fact that prema is the best sap. So, such load-bearers fail to progress in bhajana in spite of their utmost strivings, whereas the essence-seekers aiming at prema-latā very soon reach the longed-for ultimate. They are called prema-rurukṣu (those who earnestly strive for ascending up to the region of prema); they alone can in a very short time ascend up to the sphere of prema or easily become paramahaṁsas. Thus, when

one who so long simply did bear burdens, learns to love the Truth in the company of sādhus, he also soon turns to longing for prema.

When in previous births one has done good works looking forward to devotion, this invigorates reverence and a strong desire for service to Godhead, which then turns into an appetite for devotion in the company of devotees. Both bhajana and true devotees awaken sādhana-bhakti which leads to the expectation of prema. If one adopts the processes of sādhana as directed by true and pure devotees, he will before long almost turn mad for ascending the stage of prema where it can be tasted. But again, this prema will remain far in the background if he associates with half-true devotees and will not be able to exclusively devote himself to the service of Kṛṣṇa. In this stage, (1) his strong love for the fleeting world, (2) his identification of the soul with the material frame of flesh and blood and the subtle body of the mind, (3) his knowledge of things other than Kṛṣṇa, and (4) his extreme servile attitude towards *māyā* do not allow him to regard and love true devotees—crafty thoughts beguile his heart. In this way, the practicers of devotion have to remain long confined to the preliminary rights of a devotee in the first stage. No doubt they have reliance and faith in Kṛṣṇa, but it is so tender, fickle and unsteady that they may at any moment be led away by the contradictory arguments of conflicting schools and may accordingly come into the company of so-called preceptor and *sādhus*. In order to make steady their perturbed state of mind, they must learn by the process of deduction (the path of *Śruti* from a true spiritual preceptor) the true process of worship. A firm faith in the holy name will be awakened in the heart after worshiping the Deity in this way for a long time; then at last they will have determination for *nāma-bhajana* in the company of devotees.

The case is different with those few lucky ones who have an exclusively firm faith in Kṛṣṇa's holy name; they take, by unbounded grace of Kṛṣṇa, shelter at the feet of such a spiritual guide who is an ontologist of the holy name, i.e., who has realized and does see the *svarūpa* (form) of the holy name. Concerning the need for such a preceptor, Śrī Mahāprabhu says that though formal initiation may not be necessary, still a guide is essential in *nāma-bhajana*. The mere letters of the holy name may be had at any place and from anybody, but the profound and unknown truth that is lurking behind those letters can only be exposed by the grace of a true preceptor who is purely devoted to Kṛṣṇa. The grace of the spiritual guide alone can pass over from the early twilight from the ten offenses hindering the true service of the holy name.

Those who are devoted to the holy name have already from the beginning

attained the stage of the second class of the *svarūpa* (form) of the holy name. They are practically no longer bound to *nāmābhāsa* (utterance of the name avoiding the ten offenses). Truly speaking, they earnestly desire *prema—they* are true *prema-rurukṣus*. It is their religion to have *prema* for Kṛṣṇa; they make friendship with true Vaiṣṇavas, they cast kind glances at and show compassion to tender and unsteady Vaiṣṇavas, and they are indifferent to those who being puffed up with false vanity of their erudition are malicious and inimical to the devotees and Śrī-mūrtī of Bhagavān. Failing to distinguish right from wrong, the beginners who are confined to only the initial rights sometimes fall into deplorable conditions. The middle order of Vaiṣṇavas who are earnestly anxious for *prema* behave differently from the three previous classes of Vaiṣṇavas (those who only carry the burden, those who maintain bad association and those who strictly follow) and soon are blessed with *prema*, or ascend to the highest or superior order of Vaiṣṇavas. It is best to associate with this middle order of Vaiṣṇavas.

These *prema-rurukṣu* devotees chant and tell their beads three lacs (3 x 64 rounds) in every twenty-four hours, and they find such happiness in the holy name that they cannot spare a moment without Him; then, when no time can be kept in sleep, etc., they become incessant in their *bhajana*. Repeated remembrance of the meaning of the holy name as explained by Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī will, by degrees, drive out all contamination from the nature of the devotee. Then the holy name will appear in person before the spiritual eyes of the devotee. When the *svarūpa* (form) of the holy name fully appears, it is identical with the spiritual form of Kṛṣṇa. The appearance of the *svarūpa* of the holy name is the appearance of the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa. The more clearly and purely the holy name is visible, the more *bhajana* proceeds in the presence of His *svarūpa*, the more do the three elements of which primordial matter is said to be composed, namely *sattva* (the strand of goodness), *rajas* (the strand of activity) and *tamas* (the gloom of pride, haughtiness, etc. of the lowest inherent principal), disappear and there appear the spiritual attributes of Kṛṣṇa in the heart of the devotee. Then again, when there is a happy union of the name, form and attributes of Kṛṣṇa, and devotees in their *bhajana* see them, the *līlā* (pastimes) of Kṛṣṇa is awakened by the grace of Kṛṣṇa in their pure heart as soon as they are absorbed in deep and easy, natural meditation. The holy name then dances incessantly on their tongue, the form of Kṛṣṇa is visible to their soul's eye, all the attributes of Kṛṣṇa are observed in their heart and the bud of *līlā* blooms in their soul while they are buried in meditation. In this stage, five conditions of the practising devotee are to be noticed: 1. *śravana-daśā*, 2.

*varaṇa-daśā*, 3. *smaraṇa-daśā*, 4. *āpana-daśā*, 5. *prapanna-daśā*.

The happy mood which the devotee feels at the time of listening to the object of pursuit and the means of hearing from the lips of a true spiritual preceptor may be called *śravana-daśā*. In this stage, every bit of knowledge about how to chant the holy name without committing any offense to Him and of the processes and fitness of chanting the holy name is gained; this facilitates the continuity of the holy name.

When fit to receive it, the strung-together beads of *nāma-prema* can be had from *śrī gurudeva*, i.e., the disciple with every delight and from the deepest recesses of his heart cordially welcomes the boon of surrendering himself to the feet of *śrī guru* for pure and unalloyed *bhajana* and receives invigorating strength and faculty from him; this is *varaṇa-daśā*, (the choice of *śrī guru* for *bhajana* by the acceptance of the holy name and strength from him).

Remembrance, contemplation, concentration, constant meditation and trance (final beatitude) are the five processes of *smarana*. From remembrance of the holy name, the devotee thinks of the form which gives him a steady conception of the attributes; this steady conception of the attributes gives him a firm conviction of pursuing the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa and having entrance in the *līlā*, he is completely absorbed in *Kṛṣṇa-rasa*. This is *āpana-daśā*. By these stages of *smarana* and *āpana* the devotee can know and adore the eternal and daily *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa in eight different periods of the day; and when he is deeply absorbed in it, he realizes his own self and that of Kṛṣṇa. These self-realized devotees are *paramahaṁsas*.

Then at the time of his departure from this world, the devotee, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, becomes an associated counterpart of ideal object of his worship in Vraja, and thus attains the summum bonum of *nāma-bhajana*.

When should all who are seekers after *prema* leave the stage of a householder and accept *sannyāsa*, or the fourth stage? The answer is that, be he in bustee (society) or solitude, in palace or bower, be he in the stage of a *gṛhastha* or a *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī—in* whatever stage he may be in, the *prema-rurukṣu* should prefer to live in that stage only which will be favorable to the attainment of *prema* and should at once desert the stage that is a burden or antagonistic to his *bhajana*. In this connection, the lives of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Śrī Rāmananda and other personal attendants of Kṛṣṇa are worth recollection. They are all born *paramahaṁsas*. Ṛbhu, Janaka, etc. in the days of yore are seen to be *paramahaṁsa* even though they led the lives of

householders; while, on the contrary, finding household life to be detrimental and a bar to *bhajana*, Śrī Rāmānuja Svāmī, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī Gosvāmī, Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, all renounced the stage of a householder and accepted *sannyāsa.*

Kṛṣṇa's loving beauty is so enamoring that even the god of lust is charmed by Him and Kṛṣṇa Himself, being charmed by His own beauty and loveliness, covets the pleasure enjoyed by the best of His lovers—Śrī Rādhā, by lovingly serving such a form as His. So anointing Himself with the luster and complexion of Śrī Rādhā and having been imbued with Her ardent longings of love, Kṛṣṇa is ever dallying as an exemplary lover of Himself as Śrī Gaurāṅga. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the essential nature of the Supreme Being—the only real and eternal truth—is the object of love, and Śrī Gaurāṅga, the possessor and distributor of that love. Kṛṣṇa is simultaneously dallying with His dear consort in the groves of Vṛndāvana and tasting the extract of love succors flowing from His consort as Gaurāṅga at Navadvīpa, Himself singing Kṛṣṇa's name and teaching others how to love Kṛṣṇa and sing His name. In so doing, He distinguishes pointedly the real name, identical with the object Himself, from the apparent or false one which is taken profanely, blasphemously or in vain. He emphasizes that in this Kali-yuga worldly people indulge in (1) duplicity, (2) intoxication, (3) sensuality, (4) killing of animals, (5) mercenariness and so are unable to meditate upon or worship Viṣṇu and perform Vedic sacrifices. So the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name is the only meditation, the only sacrifice, the only worship in this Kali age—the name is the means, the name is the end. But it should be noted with the utmost care that Kṛṣṇa's name is not a mere combination of letters or utterance; an appearance is not identity. The fire and the glow worm, though similar in appearance, are not identical. The minutest spark of fire set consciously or unconsciously, seriously or playfully, will instantaneously burn an inflammable thing, whereas a thousand glow worms will not be able to do that, even in a thousand years. Kṛṣṇa's name is identical with Kṛṣṇa Himself and pregnant with all the properties and attributes of Kṛṣṇa. So His name, unlike all other names, is full of energy, perfect, eternal, pure, devoid of illusion and eternally free.

The aurora of sunrise is sufficient to dispel the darkness of night and to drive the wild animals to their lairs and thieves and dacoits to their resorts; it enables us to distinguish the various objects of senses and ushers the advent of the glowing lamp of heaven. So *nāmābhāsa* stops poverty from planting our pillows with thorns, destroys our worldly hankerings and dispels our illusory gloom so

that we may see the name face to face. When the ever-burning sun peeps out of the eastern horizon, its ever-effulgent rays make us see it face to face, feel its golden rays and enable us to see all objects bathed therein. The sun is seen and felt by us with its own rays and heat and not by the help of any other glowing object. The brightest candles of the universe put together cannot make the sun visible to us. When our dreamy nights are at an end, when we shake off our torpor, open our eyes, and turn them to the east, we see the sun of the holy name with all His glory and beauty.